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Agriculture development and food security

Agriculture development and food security

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report examines challenges to the achievement of food and nutrition security and provides an update on progress in implementing sustainable agricultural policies and practices in line with the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. The main challenges to such security include low productivity and low investment in smallholder agriculture, worsening land degradation and water scarcity in many agricultural areas, the intensifying effects of climate change on agricultural production and the resultant chronic or periodic shortfalls in supply. There has been some progress since 2008 in raising agricultural investment rates in developing countries, notably in Africa, and in strengthening social protection of vulnerable groups, including through initiatives aimed not only at tackling hunger but at ensuring balanced nutrition. Nevertheless, long-term challenges to productivity and food and nutrition security as a result of resource degradation are only now beginning to be addressed. The adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want" (resolution 66/288) is an encouraging development in the global fight against land degradation.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, at its sixty-sixth session, in its resolution 66/220 entitled "Agriculture development and food security", requested the Secretary-General to report at its sixty-seventh session on developments related to issues highlighted in the resolution and on progress in the implementation of the outcome of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. As stated in the Plan of Action adopted at the World Food Summit, held in Rome in 1996, "Food and nutrition security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".[1] Food and nutrition security therefore covers availability, access, utilization and stability issues, and, because of its focus on the attributes of individuals, also includes their energy, protein and nutrient needs for life, activities, reproductive health, growth and long-term capabilities. Food security is a precondition for the full enjoyment of the right to food.

3. The Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security,[2] contained in the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security adopted in Rome in 2009, provide a strategic underpinning for coordinated action by all stakeholders at the global, regional and country levels while embracing a twin-track approach to fighting hunger. They call on the international community to:

(a) Invest in country - owned plans, aimed at channelling resources to well - designed and results-based programmes and partnerships;

(b) Foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global levels to improve governance, promote better allocation of resources, avoid duplication of efforts and identify response-gaps;

(c) Strive for a comprehensive twin - track approach to food security;

(d) Ensure a strong role for the multilateral system by sustained improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness of multilateral institutions;

(e) Ensure sustained and substantial commitment by all partners to investment in agriculture and food security and nutrition, with the provision of necessary resources in a timely and reliable fashion, aimed at multi - year plans and programmes.

4. The report examines challenges to the achievement of food and nutrition security and provides an update on progress in implementing sustainable agricultural policies in line with the Rome Principles. Inputs from the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on Global Food Security, as well as contributions from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), have enhanced its content.

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[1] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit, 13-17 November 1996* (WFS 96/REP), part I, appendix.

[2] FAO, document WSFS 2009/2.

II. Overview

A. Current state of food and nutrition insecurity in the world

5. Currently, there are 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty, including close to 925 million who suffer from hunger and more than 200 million children under age 5 who suffer from malnutrition. In addition, micronutrient malnutrition, often referred to as "hidden hunger", affects approximately 2 billion people worldwide, more than one third of the global population. Close to 10 million children die before their fifth birthday every year as a consequence of malnutrition.

6. The food crisis of 2007-2008, which was followed by the financial and economic crisis of 2009, drew glaring attention to the daily challenges faced by millions of families around the world in their struggle to overcome hunger and poverty and establish stable livelihoods that support a dignified way of life. Despite the efforts of many, and the commitment of the international community in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015, persistent hunger and malnutrition remain the norm for millions of human beings.

7. If hunger and food insecurity are to be overcome, an estimated 60 per cent increase in agricultural productivity, including a 100 per cent increase in developing countries, will be necessary by 2050. However, the world's ecosystems, biodiversity and associated goods and services are also under increasing pressure from the loss of crop diversity, the overexploitation of fish stocks, deforestation, degradation and losses of arable land and aquatic ecosystems, growing competition for increasingly scarce water and the impact of climate change. Responsible environmental stewardship as well as greater fairness in food management and distribution are important contributing factors to the achievement of universal food and nutrition security.[3]

B. Current economic situation

8. Following many decades of decline, food prices have risen over most of the last decade, becoming increasingly volatile, and they are likely to remain high and to fluctuate sharply as a result of many complex factors. While some large countries were able to deal with the worst of the world food crisis between 2006 and 2008, populations in many small import-dependent countries experienced large price increases that had adverse effects on their lives and which, even if temporary, may have had permanent effects on their future earning capacity and ability to escape poverty.[4]

9. Climate change and its associated adverse effects on agricultural production, increased linkages between energy and agricultural markets owing to the growing demand for biofuels and increased financialization of food and agricultural

[3] FAO, 2012, *Towards the future we want: End hunger and make the transition to sustainable agricultural and food systems* (see www.fao.org).

[4] FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2011, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2011: How does international price volatility affect domestic economies and food security?* (see www.fao.org).

commodities all suggest that price volatility is here to stay, and that it may actually increase.

10. There are additional challenges related to the declining rates of yield for some crops. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute, even without climate change, the price of rice, maize and wheat is projected to increase by 25 per cent, 48 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively, by 2050, in a business-as-usual scenario.[5]

11. Higher prices act as incentives for increased production, and are a boom to farmers who are able to access markets. For consumers, however, in particular poor consumers, the effects can be daunting. Many people living in extreme poverty spend nearly 70 per cent of their income on food. In addition, to the roughly 1 billion who are undernourished, there are several billion others who live at the margins of food insecurity and who are vulnerable to food price increases and are poorly served by or cannot access safety nets. Rising food prices have been key elements of destabilization and civil unrest in a number of countries in recent years, with serious disturbances and food-related riots affecting, inter alia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, the Philippines, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe.[6]

12. Overall, increasing incomes and improving access are likely to provide better long-term solutions than artificially trying to keep domestic prices low through the use of price controls and restrictions, which can have a negative effect in rural areas, reducing incentives to provide the needed increase in production, and have negative spillover effects on international markets. Moreover, the structural causes of hunger and malnutrition often prevent progress, and efforts to overcome them require high-level political commitment and prioritization in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

C. Structural causes of hunger and malnutrition

13. The structural causes of hunger and malnutrition are linked to lack of economic and social empowerment, natural resource degradation and scarcity, climatic pressures and demographic, social and governance issues.[7] Protracted political crises or conflicts are the most devastating of such events, destroying crops and laying waste to natural resources, preventing provision of food assistance and undermining progress in sustainable development. In addition, transboundary threats such as plant pests, animal diseases and food safety are causes for concern.

14. Hunger and malnutrition also persist owing to the lack of economic and social empowerment experienced by millions of people worldwide. The rural poor often

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[5] See International Food Policy Research Institute, *2011 Global Food Policy Report* (Washington, D.C., 2012).

[6] See *Food and Agriculture: The future of sustainability* (Sustainable Development in the 21st Century project) (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, 2012).

[7] Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, consolidated version agreed at the plenary of the intergovernmental open-ended working group for Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, Rome, 27-29 June and 19 July 2012 (final version will be submitted to the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on World Food Security in October 2012).

lack secure access to productive resources such as fertile land, water, agricultural inputs, credit and knowledge, while irregular low-wage employment or unemployment are commonplace among the urban poor.

15. Demographic pressures play an important role in persistent hunger and malnutrition. These are exacerbated by the lack of effective social protection systems, in particular for women who experience many forms of legal and cultural discrimination. This includes the specific nutritional vulnerabilities of women and children, which are often not adequately addressed. Persistent marginalization and discrimination against vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples and internally displaced persons or refugees, contributes, in many cases, to food insecurity and malnutrition.

16. Natural and human-induced disasters, the degradation of ecosystems and the depletion of natural resources are also major causes of food insecurity. The environmental integrity of many ecosystems is either currently being challenged or facing the risk of progressive breakdown in productive capacity as a result of the combined effects of excessive demographic pressure and unsustainable agriculture use and practice. The food insecure, many of whom live in marginal areas, are disproportionately exposed to natural hazards and are least able to cope with the effects of crises and shocks.

D. Environmental impacts on agriculture and food security

17. The world's cultivated area has grown by 12 per cent over the past 50 years, and its irrigated area has doubled over the same period, accounting for most of the net increase in cultivated land. In the same time period, agricultural production has increased between 2.5 and 3 times owing to significant increases in the yields of major crops. However, global achievements in production in some regions have been associated with degradation of land and water resources and the deterioration of related ecosystem goods and services, including biodiversity, biomass, carbon storage, soil health, water storage and supply. As a result, agriculture productivity growth has slowed in many parts of the world.[8]

Climate-related extreme weather events

18. Agriculture is the one human endeavour likely to be most affected by changes in climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has noted that farmers in developing countries, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, will be hit the hardest by the impacts of climate change. Climate-related changes, including extreme temperatures and volatile weather patterns, pose many threats to agriculture, including reduction of productivity, production stability and incomes. To address the challenges ahead, additional funding will be needed for agricultural research on climate-related adaptation and adaptation projects in developing countries. Currently, financing for such projects from the Global Environmental Facility remains a small fraction of what is invested in the clean development mechanism and other carbon-market projects.[6]

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[8] See P. Kumar and S. Mittal, "Agricultural Productivity Trends in India: Sustainability Issues", *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, Vol. 19.

Land degradation

19. Fully one quarter of global land resources are currently ranked as highly degraded, with another 8 per cent as moderately degraded, 36 per cent as stable or slightly degraded and 10 per cent as improving.[9] The definition of degradation extends beyond soil and water degradation to include an assessment of other aspects of affected ecosystems, such as biodiversity loss. Worldwide, large areas of all continents are experiencing land degradation, with particularly a high incidence along the west coast of the Americas, across the Mediterranean region of Southern Europe and North Africa, in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa and throughout Asia. Although land degradation is a generalized risk, some 40 per cent of the world's degraded lands are found in areas with the highest incidence of poverty.

Water scarcity

20. According to the International Water Management Institute, with more than 70 per cent of global surface and groundwater extraction being used for the production of food and other agricultural products, the agriculture sector is the biggest single user of water. Intensive extraction of groundwater in key cereal producing regions around the world are reducing aquifer storage capacity and removing the accessible groundwater supply upon which rural communities rely.[10] Water use has been increasing globally at more than twice the rate of population growth over the last century, and an increasing number of regions are nearing the limit at which water services can be sustainably delivered. Lack of water is a major cause of famine and undernourishment. By 2025, it is expected that 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity and two thirds of the world population may be experiencing stress conditions.[11]

III. Current and emerging challenges to enhancing global food and nutrition security

A. Growing demand for food crops to produce energy

21. Global agriculture is increasingly linked to energy markets. Oil price projections in the macroeconomic assumptions contained in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-FAO publication *Agricultural Outlook 2012-2021* are on average about $25 above those used last year, ranging from $110 to $140 per barrel over the period. The higher oil prices are a fundamental factor behind the higher agricultural commodity price projections, affecting not only oil-related costs of production but also increasing the demand for biofuels and the agricultural feedstocks used in their production. Support for biofuels in 2009, which was estimated at $20 billion, the bulk of it in the United States of America and the countries members of the European Union, is projected to

[9] See FAO, 2011, *The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture: Managing systems at risk* (Rome, 2011).

[10] Countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia are withdrawing water in excess of critical thresholds.

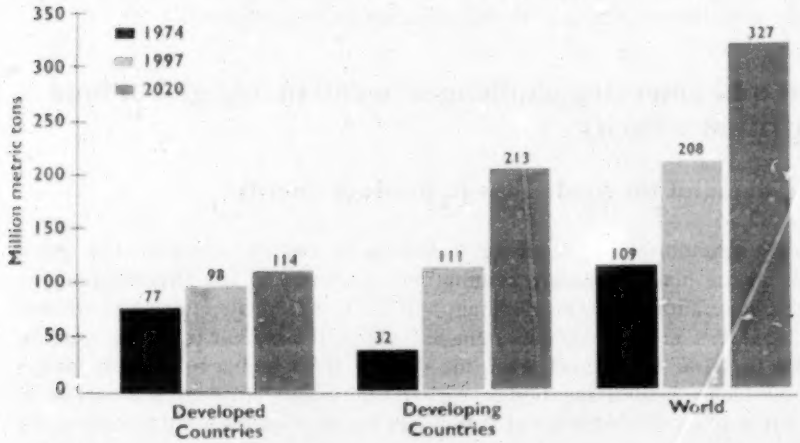
[11] FAO defines absolute water scarcity as less than 500 cubic metres per year per capita, and stress conditions as between 500 and 1,000 cubic metres per year per capita.

rise to $45 billion by 2020.[12] By 2021, global production of bioethanol and biodiesel is projected to almost double, with production heavily concentrated in Brazil, the United States and the European Union. Biofuels, which are based mainly on agricultural feedstocks, are expected to consume a growing share of the global production of sugarcane (34 per cent), vegetable oil (16 per cent) and coarse grains (14 per cent) by 2021. Commodity prices tend to be linked with global energy prices; as energy prices fluctuate and trend upwards, so do food prices.[13] The high dependence of the global food sector on fossil fuels is also a growing concern.[14]

B. Evolving patterns of food consumption

22. The heightened demand for livestock products in developing countries is creating significant new pressures for grains and water. Recent increases in food consumption per capita are mainly due to overall economic progress of developing countries, although world figures are decisively influenced by significant gains made in some of the most populous among them, in particular in Brazil, China, Indonesia and Mexico. As per capita food consumption has increased, there has been a parallel change in dietary patterns in the countries that experienced such growth. Demand for livestock products in developing countries has increased considerably since the 1970s, and the resources in terms of the land, water, grain and energy required to produce them have risen accordingly, as shown in the figure below.[6]

World demand for meat



Source: International Food Policy Research Institute, Impact projections, June 2001, and FAO statistics for 1974.

[12] See International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2010*.

[13] OECD-FAO, *Agricultural Outlook 2012-2021* (http://www.oecd.org/site/oecd-faoagriculturaloutlook/).

[14] FAO, *Energy-smart food for people and climate*, issue paper (Rome, 2011) (http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2454e/i2454e00.pdf.

C. Food losses and waste

23. According to a study carried out under the auspices of FAO, roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year, approximately 1.3 billion tons, is lost or wasted. Losses and waste happen all along the food chain, with significant differences depending on region and specific product. This loss and waste corresponds to more than 10 per cent of the world's total caloric energy consumption.[15] Food losses and waste occur in both high- and low-income countries, although following different patterns. In medium- and high-income countries, food is largely wasted at the consumption stage. In low-income countries, it is lost mostly during the early and middle stages of the food supply chain — much less is wasted at the consumer level. The causes of food losses and waste in low-income countries are mainly associated with financial, managerial and technical limitations in harvesting techniques, storage and cooling facilities in difficult climatic conditions and to infrastructure, packaging and marketing systems. Given that many smallholder farmers in developing countries live on the margins of food insecurity, a reduction in food losses could have an immediate and significant impact on their livelihoods.

24. Most losses are avoidable, to some degree, and certain types of waste could be eliminated almost entirely. In developing countries, investments and other measures to improve the processing, storage and transport infrastructure should address much of the problem of waste from post-harvest losses. In developed countries, possible avenues for policy action include engaging with the private sector to increase awareness and develop voluntary agreements, reviewing regulations that may inadvertently generate avoidable waste, supporting research to improve storage, prolong shelf life and identify better ways to detect deterioration and implementing public education campaigns.

D. Adapting to climate change

25. The impacts of climate change are reducing productivity and leading to greater instability in production in the agricultural sector in communities that already have high levels of food insecurity and environmental degradation and limited options for coping with adverse weather conditions.[16] Strengthening the resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change is a high priority for agricultural research. Adaptation measures involving organic soil nutrient enhancement and other ecologically sound methods can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, an approach popularly known as climate-smart agriculture. Conservation agriculture, agroforestry, improved livestock and water management, integrated pest management and ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture can all make important contributions both to enhancing food and livelihood security and generating environmental benefits.

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[15] Food losses refer to the decrease in edible food mass available for human consumption throughout the different segments of the supply chain. Food losses resulting from decisions to discard food that still has value to others are referred to as food waste.

[16] See D. B. Lobell, W. Schlenker and J. Costa-Roberts, "Climate Trends and Global Crop Production since 1980", *Science*, vol. 333, No. 6042.

E. Protracted crises and conflicts

26. Countries in protracted crises require special attention. Often exposed to long-lasting or recurring crises, such countries have limited capacity to take action in a number of areas, a fact that exacerbates food insecurity and related problems. The Horn of Africa and the Sahel are the two most serious areas of protracted crises, food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in the world, with a combined population of nearly 300 million, most of whom live on less than $1 a day. Those countries largely depend on agriculture, with livestock contributing up to 20 per cent of the economy in a very fragile and drought-prone environment.

IV. Progress in fostering coordination, cooperation and effectiveness

A. High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis

27. The High-level Task Force, established by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in April 2008, brings together the heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as relevant bodies of the Secretariat, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), OECD and the World Trade Organization. The primary aim of the Task Force is to promote a comprehensive and unified response to the challenge of achieving global food security. In 2008, the Task Force agreed on a Comprehensive Framework for Action, which set out the joint position of the members of the Task Force. The framework, by providing Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society groups with a range of policies and actions from which to draw appropriate responses, is intended to be a catalyst for action in this field.

28. In 2010, the Comprehensive Framework for Action was updated to better reflect the evolving context and new elements considered necessary for a comprehensive approach, including gender, climate change, price volatility and sustainability. The updated Comprehensive Framework for Action is the United Nations system-wide coordinated approach for supporting country action that leads to sustainable and resilient rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security for all. The framework reaffirms the realization of the right to food through the twin-track approach of responding to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable people through effective safety nets while simultaneously building longer-term livelihood and food production resilience. In August 2011 the Task Force prepared a summary of the framework, which was widely disseminated during 2012.[17] The Task Force is currently undertaking internal review and external evaluation of its achievements and outcomes in order to provide evidence and guidance for reorienting its focus on the five objectives of the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge and to guide a coherent United Nations system-wide approach to food and nutrition security.

[17] See http://www.un-foodsecurity.org/node/842.

B. Zero Hunger Challenge

29. The Zero Hunger Challenge is the Secretary-General's vision for a future free from hunger. Launched at the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, it envisions a world where everyone enjoys the right to adequate food, women are empowered, food systems are sustainable and resilient, support to family farming is increased, poverty is reduced through agriculture and rural development and good nutrition is assured from the start of pregnancy through every child's second birthday. It is an advocacy platform, with five objectives:

(a) 100 per cent access to adequate food, all year round;

(b) Zero stunted children under 2 years of age;

(c) All food systems are sustainable;

(d) 00 per cent growth in smallholder productivity and income;

(e) Zero food is lost or wasted.

30. The Zero Hunger Challenge is an invitation to all stakeholders to take action towards achieving zero hunger. It is rooted in current processes such as the Committee on World Food Security and the High-level Task Force, but seeks a renewed commitment to promises already made, builds on existing work being undertaken and encourages greater focus on food and nutrition security by all.[18]

C. Committee on World Food Security

31. The reformed Committee on World Food Security is a new model of governance for global food security based on multilateral and multi-stakeholder engagement. An essential part of the reform was the creation of the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, an innovative science-policy interface to advise the Committee and to present it with evidence-based analysis and advice on issues of importance so as to provide for better-informed policy debates. In the course of the 2009 reform, the Committee was seen as the foremost platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders working together in a coordinated manner, based on principles of inclusiveness, country ownership and flexibility, in line with regional and country circumstances. Similar multi-stakeholder platforms and alliances are envisaged at the regional and national levels. In May 2012, the Committee endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, the first comprehensive, global instrument on tenure and its administration prepared through intergovernmental negotiations.

D. Cooperation among Rome-based agencies

32. The development of a joint response to the Horn of Africa and Sahel crises, coordination of the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development and collaboration in the preparation of reports for the Group of 20 provided clear

[18] http://www.un-foodsecurity.org/node/1356.

impetus for strengthening cooperation between FAO, IFAD and WFP. The concept of resilience is key to ongoing collaboration in field operations. The joint response to the situation in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel demonstrated the range, scope and value of strengthened collaboration among the agencies. Collaboration is also deepening through projects adopting resilience-based approaches such as "Purchase for Progress" and "Purchase from Africans for Africa". Both projects involve geographic overlap and the development of a joint strategy on resilience, take stock of good practices in protecting and improving livelihoods, explore possibilities for joint advocacy and fundraising and develop joint messages for resource partners.

33. The three agencies continued to strengthen their collaboration with other institutions such as OECD, the World Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in preparing inter-agency reports for the Group of Twenty and the Group of Eight and actively promoting responsible agricultural investment, including biodiversity, which fosters work on agricultural biodiversity, in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development.

E. Coordination on nutrition

34. The Scale Up Nutrition initiative was introduced in 2010 to encourage increased political commitment and programmatic alignment to accelerate reductions in levels of global hunger and undernutrition. The emphasis of the initiative is on women and children under 2 years of age, and in this regard it focuses on the 1,000-day window of opportunity between pregnancy and the child's second birthday, which is the most critical time for fostering the healthy physical and mental development of children. Partners in the initiative are increasing the resources made available to participating countries and better aligning their support to national plans for implementing specific nutrition interventions that have been shown to be effective. They are also helping countries to implement their nutrition-sensitive development strategies through multiple sectors. The overall goal of the initiative is to ensure that the potential of young lives, particularly the intellectual, physical and social progress of children, is increased, thus contributing to the economic development of nations.

35. Since the initiative was introduced, Heads of State from 28 countries with high burdens of undernutrition have committed to scale up nutrition, and others are supporting their efforts. Those countries are home to 53 million stunted children under the age of 5, or 27 per cent of all stunted children, including millions of women affected by anaemia in pregnancy and children who experience micronutrient deficiencies. The Group of 20 has expressed support for the initiative, and both development partners and developing countries are represented among the States members of the Group of 20.[19] Over 100 global, regional and national development partners from civil society, academia, bilateral and multilateral organizations support the initiative, and the speed with which it has evolved in the last 18 months is an indicator of increasing political commitment to nutrition. In 2013, the 20-year review of the International Conference on Nutrition will convene as the first high-level intergovernmental conference devoted to addressing the world's nutrition problems in the twenty-first century and will ensure support for nutrition security actions.

[19] See UNICEF, *Tracking Progress on Child and Maternal Nutrition* (New York, 2009).

F. FAO/UNEP: sustainable consumption and production

36. The FAO/UNEP joint programme on sustainable consumption and production in food and agriculture is catalysing partnerships among United Nations agencies, other international agencies, Governments, industry and civil society whose activities, together, can promote the essential transition to sustainability. The programme promotes international cooperation in promoting policies, investments, production and consumption patterns that enhance food security while meeting economic and environmental needs. A meeting convened in May 2012 focused on key activity areas identified by the Marrakech task force on sustainable consumption and production in food and agriculture, and featured panellists from Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Ghana and Switzerland, who shared their experiences in implementing such activities in the food sector. FAO, with UNEP, will implement the programme, which involves a task force comprised of representatives of Member States, United Nations agencies, the private sector and civil society.[20]

G. Group of 8: New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

37. At their meeting in May 2012, the leaders of the Group of 8 agreed to launch the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which aims to accelerate the flow of private capital to African agriculture, take to scale new technologies and other innovations that can increase sustainable agricultural productivity and reduce the risk borne by vulnerable economies and communities in an effort to lift 50 million people out of poverty over the next decade. The New Alliance is guided by: a collective commitment to invest in credible, comprehensive and country-owned plans; develop new tools to mobilize private capital, spur and scale innovation and manage risk; and engage and leverage the capacity of private sector partners, including women and smallholder farmers, entrepreneurs and domestic and international companies.[21] It supports the processes of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, which is designed to catalyse private sector investment, with $3 billion already committed.

V. Progress in implementing the twin-track approach

A. Short-term safety nets

38. The twin-track approach outlined in the updated Comprehensive Framework for Action and endorsed in the Five Rome Principles[1] emphasizes four dimensions in its first track, focusing on the social protection aspect of ensuring food security: availability, access, utilization and stability. Safety nets are critical to meeting the immediate needs of people who lack the purchasing power to access food. Employment guarantee programmes are a key element of productive safety net programmes and have mitigated the impact of extreme food shortages in the 2010-2011 Horn of Africa drought-induced food crisis. The impact of the crisis was less

[20] At its third meeting in April 2012, the task force defined a pluriannual programme of work and created four groups to implement it on four activity clusters: (a) information platforms; (b) communications; (c) enabling conditions; and (d) market-based approaches.

[21] See http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/19/camp-david-declaration.

severe in Ethiopian communities that had well-developed productive safety net programmes than in the neighbouring countries that lacked them. Such programmes require years of investment, capacity-building and systems development. Within communities at risk of recurrent crisis, such programmes, which can be scaled up rapidly, should be implemented.

39. The Comprehensive Framework for Action reported on the adoption by the United Nations system of the Social Protection Floor Initiative, which encompasses a set of transfers, services and facilities ensuring that all citizens worldwide may enjoy all of their human rights. In 2011, an ILO-WHO advisory group chaired by the Head of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) advocated the universal adoption of a social protection floor for fair and inclusive globalization. The recommendation concerning national floors for social protection was adopted at the 2012 meeting of the leaders of the Group of 20 and is being endorsed within ILO conference processes.

40. Such global processes create a context within which national policies for resilient food systems and nutrition security are being advanced along the twin tracks. The social protection floor is now a critical element of policies for food and nutrition security in most countries, especially in those where resilience is undermined by recurrent crises. Although they can be undermined by political instability and budget shortages, they are increasingly considered to be an essential element of long-term support, key to the long-term well-being of children and insurance in the face of an unstable climate.

41. Experience in many communities affected by long-term instability suggests that most durable social protection floor and productive safety net schemes are built on traditional community-based support schemes, including those that are faith-based, which can continue to function when central government capacity is reduced. The "3N" initiative in the Niger is an example of a national programme explicitly focusing on the building of long-term resilience through a combination of agriculture, water, food systems, nutrition and social protection interventions, grounded at all times in community-level realities and local institutions.

B. Medium- and long-term actions to build resilience through sustainable agriculture

42. The second track in the twin-track approach involves building longer-term livelihoods and strengthening food production resilience by eliminating the root causes of hunger, poverty and malnutrition.[22]

Access and secure tenure for women

43. Owing to a range of legal and cultural constraints regarding land inheritance, ownership and use, fewer than 20 per cent of landholders are women. Providing women landowners with the same access to inputs as their male counterparts would increase their yields, raise total agricultural output in developing countries and lift

[22] These outcomes are defined in both the updated Comprehensive Framework for Action and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development, "The future we want" (resolution 66/288).

millions of people out of hunger.[23] The gender gap is remarkably consistent across countries and contexts: women have less access than men to agricultural assets, inputs and services and to rural employment opportunities. The gender gap is found for many assets, inputs and services and it imposes costs on the agriculture sector, the broader economy and society as well as on women themselves. Women in rural Africa and Asia are pooling millions of dollars to buy better seeds and tools, yet women farmers still receive only 5 per cent of available credit. Designing more gender-responsive agricultural development programmes would be a positive step towards reducing gender inequalities in agriculture.

Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity

44. Sustainable agricultural intensification is an immense challenge for the smallholder farmer. In all agricultural production systems, the transition to more sustainable practices requires the careful harnessing of ecosystem services. To utilize their full potential, agricultural ecosystems must be managed as part of the wider landscape of nature. Reinforcing the natural resilience of the land is fundamental. Deforestation, degradation of catchments/watersheds, land degradation, depletion of reefs and coastal ecosystems, especially coral reefs and mangroves, all reduce nature's productivity as well as its resilience and its capacity to provide protection to human communities.

45. According to FAO figures, aquaculture is the fastest-growing food sector, with an annual growth rate of nearly 8 per cent over the past decade. It now supplies 60 million tons a year, or close to 50 per cent of the global food fish supply.[24] The need for an ecosystem approach to the intensification and management of the sector has been recognized as a key strategy for integrating aquaculture with other food systems. Rice-fish farming and integrated multitrophic aquaculture are good examples of sustainable integration as a base for intensification.

46. Diversification of varieties, breeds and production activities in all agricultural landscapes is another way to sustainably increase resilience and productivity. In recent years, 50 per cent of the increase in crop yields has come from new seed varieties, such as the fast-maturing variety, "new rice for Africa", which has transformed local economies in several parts of the continent.

47. Greater diversity in agricultural ecosystems may lead to healthier and more sustainable nutrition, which is an important consideration for producers whose consumption is largely drawn from their own production. More needs to be done, especially at the farm level, to build local capacities to conserve and use genetic biodiversity. Technical solutions exist, and research systems are focusing on the better integration of rural resources and processes.[25]

Enhancing market access

48. The further liberalization of agricultural trade remains a high priority for multilateral trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization. While, on average, OECD countries have lowered agricultural producer subsidies by around

[23] FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011: Women in agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development* (Rome, 2011).

[24] FAO, *The State of the World's Fisheries and Aquaculture 2012* (Rome, 2012).

[25] See IFAD, *Rural Poverty Report 2011* (Rome, 2010).

44 per cent since 2000, in many developed countries support for farmers continues to be significant (averaging 18 per cent of gross farm receipts).[26] New agricultural trade issues have arisen following the spike in food costs in 2008, when a number of major food exporters introduced export restrictions, highlighting the need of greater attention to the concerns of food-insecure and food-importing countries.[27]

49. Evidence shows that strong agricultural and food cooperatives contribute to improved food security and are highly resilient to financial, environmental and other types of shocks and crises. Cooperatives provide a range of services to their members, in particular, access to productive inputs, markets and information and communication. They also ensure that their members obtain access to and management of natural resources, as well as to have a voice in policy decision-making processes. However, cooperatives are able to thrive and act as a vehicle for inclusion and market integration only if they have an appropriate enabling environment. In the context of the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives, the international community is promoting the role of agricultural and food cooperatives in employment generation, poverty alleviation and improved food and nutrition security.

Measures to manage the effects of food price volatility

50. The impact of world price changes on household food and nutrition security is highly context-specific and depends, inter alia, on the individual commodity, national policies that affect price transmission from world markets to domestic markets and the demographic and production characteristics of different households. Such a diversity of impacts, both within and between countries, highlights the need for improved data and analysis so that Governments can implement more effective policies.

51. In June 2012, at its meeting in Mexico, the Group of 20 welcomed the progress made in implementing its 2011 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture adopted by Ministers of Agriculture of the States members of the Group. Vice-Ministers of Agriculture submitted a progress report on the implementation of initiatives established in the action plan, including key findings and recommendations on sustainable agricultural production and productivity growth.[28] They welcomed progress made in the implementation of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and the launch of the "AgResults" initiative, which utilizes prize awards to incentivize innovation of new agricultural products and systems of particular importance to low-income countries. The first meeting of the Global Food Market Information Group convened in February 2012 to review procedures and tools that individual country members use for drawing national supply and demand balances for AMIS commodities and to establish the basis for an agreed methodology. The first meeting of the AMIS rapid response forum, held in April 2012, considered the market situation and outlook for AMIS commodities.

Biofuels

52. Expansion of biofuels production poses new challenges for food security insofar as there is a sizeable diversion of certain staple food commodities to fuel markets, a diversion that has an impact on the affordability of food. The growing linkage

[26] See http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MON20113_1.

[27] High-level Panel of Experts, Price volatility and food security, 2011 report No. 1.

[28] See http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2012/2012-0518-agriculture.pdf.

between food and energy markets increases potential for shocks to be transmitted from one to the other. On the production side, sustainable intensification approaches and cutting waste are key measures for reducing agriculture's dependence on energy-intensive inputs. On the demand side, measures such as removing subsidies or increasing flexibility in biofuel mandates have been proposed to reduce the pressure on food markets from biofuels, particularly first-generation biofuels from food crops. Opening international markets for both feedstocks and renewable energy products can shift production to where it is most economically efficient, but safeguards may still be needed in producing countries to encourage environmentally sustainable production. At the same time, efforts should be made to accelerate scientific research on second-generation biofuels that would compete less with food.[29]

Promoting research, technology diffusion and transfer

53. Technology can facilitate the sort of swift adaptability that will increasingly be necessary as climate change and other pressures mount. Information and communications technology is enabling innovative techniques to reach users in all but the most remote areas. The global diffusion of cellular and wireless communication technologies, coupled with the increasing ubiquity of the Internet, provide information on market pricing, supply and demand trends and remote technical assistance to farmers. Creating more local capacity to access and use very low-cost information systems is an area of broad consensus.

54. Globally integrated monitoring systems can now produce timely public information with forecasts of food sufficiency in every country around the globe. The utilization of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technologies as the driver of precision agriculture has allowed growers to produce more, with less crop inputs and energy usage. Utilization of satellite-based remote monitoring and in-field sensing technologies greatly aid in the global and regional monitoring of crop productivity and weather-related impacts. As these technologies are integrated and as the cost of such technologies decline, we are seeing the emergence and wider deployment of sustainable agriculture decision-support tools.[5]

VI. Progress in ensuring means of implementation

55. Developing countries are sustaining their political commitment to increasing agricultural investment following the 2008 food security crisis, and many are increasing the share of their national budgets dedicated to agriculture and rural development. In 2010, the average share of national budgets spent on agriculture was around 6.5 per cent, and seven African countries are allocating more than 10 per cent of their national budgets to agriculture. Of the 30 countries that signed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme national compacts as of March 2012, 27 have developed an investment plan assessed by an independent technical review, and 24 have held business meetings with donors, civil society and the private sector. Of the remaining African countries, eight have launched the process and 10 more are expected to formally do so in 2012.[30]

[29] See http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/est/VolatilityInteragency_Report_to_the_G20_on_Food_Price_Volatility.pdf.

[30] See www.nepad-caadp.net.

56. According to recent data reported by the Development Cooperation Directorate of OECD, total official development assistance (ODA) for food and nutrition security stood at around $11.7 billion in 2010, an increase of 49 per cent in real terms since 2002. Most of the ODA has been allocated to long-term investments in agricultural development, totalling 61 per cent for the period 2008-2010. At the regional level, sub-Saharan Africa received 41 per cent of ODA for food and nutrition security in 2009-2010, followed by Asia with 32 per cent.

57. Half the amounts pledged for agriculture and food security at the L'Aquila Food Security Summit in 2009 have now been disbursed. The Group of 8 countries have increased assistance for short-term food security needs and longer-term development by more than 25 per cent above the levels recorded before the adoption of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative.[21]

58. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, set up by the World Bank in 2010 as one of the most important elements of the response of the international community for channelling long-term investments in food and nutrition security, received pledges of $1.2 billion in 2012 (of which $917 million is pledged to its public sector window, $248 million to the private sector window, and $40 million pending assignment). A total of $752 million has already been received, of which $658 has been allocated to country-led programmes of 18 countries. Projects supported in 2010 and 2011 are expected to impact 7.5 million beneficiaries. During 2012, six new countries will receive support from the programme: Burundi, the Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania. In September 2012, a new call for proposals is expected. The programme includes a wide range of stakeholders in its governance structure, especially at the country level.

59. While private investment in agriculture can be a boon to productivity, efforts to attract large-scale foreign investment pose risks where policies and institutions do not provide secure tenure and adequate safeguards to domestic smallholders and their communities. It is in response to a wave of such foreign investment following the 2008 food security crisis that a number of United Nations entities initiated discussions on the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment, which are currently ongoing in the framework of the Committee on World Food Security.[31]

VII. The way forward

60. At the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development in June 2012, world leaders reaffirmed their commitments regarding the right to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right to be free from hunger. They further reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing food security and access to adequate, safe and nutritious food for present and future generations in line with the Five Rome Principles, including for children under the age of 2, and through national, regional and global food security and nutrition strategies. They recognized that farmers, including small-scale farmers and fisherfolk, pastoralists and foresters, can make important contributions to sustainable development through production activities that are environmentally sound, enhance food security and the livelihood of the poor and invigorate production and sustained economic growth.[32]

[31] See http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/G-20/PRAI.aspx.

[32] See resolution 66/288.

61. One of the most important outcomes of the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development was the decision to launch an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders, with a view to proposing a set of global sustainable development goals to be agreed upon by the General Assembly.[32] The international community has begun to think about how a goal related to advancing food and nutrition security would figure in the post-2015 development agenda, given that the first Millennium Development Goal has as target a halving of hunger by 2015 and that, even if achieved, this would leave the goal of completely eradicating hunger and malnutrition unfulfilled.

A. Build resilience

62. Given the increasing and multiple pressures on agriculture and on the natural resource base, business as usual is no longer an option. Climate-resilient agriculture that ensures food security and protects the environment must become a global priority. In order to avert a food crisis, we must continue advances in agricultural productivity in ways that are environmentally sustainable. Enhancing food system diversity generally strengthens resilience and the proper balance between diversity and specialization will need to be found for the local context. Even as local production is strengthened in countries now heavily dependent on food imports, agricultural trade will continue to play a critical role in ensuring global food security.[5]

63. The reliability and timeliness of early warning systems needs to be improved, and the capacity to develop and utilize such systems should be strengthened at both the national and regional level, with a focus on countries that are particularly vulnerable to price shocks and food emergencies.[33] Important areas of intervention, including social protection and risk reduction, are often underfunded. Food assistance can help build the basis for long-term food security, but to do so it is critical that it support as far as possible local and regional food producers. The use of a varied set of food assistance tools, complemented by innovations in how food is procured, will serve as a strong basis for food security in the longer term.

B. Close the gender gap

64. Although women comprise around 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20 per cent in Latin America to 50 per cent in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, women smallholders across all regions continue to have less access than men to productive resources and opportunities. The gender gap persists for many assets, inputs and services, including land, livestock, labour, education, extension and financial services and technology, and it imposes costs on the agriculture sector in terms of lower productivity, the broader economy and society, as well as on women themselves. Closing the gender gap in access to productive resources in agriculture is thus a high priority.

[33] FAO, IFAD, IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, WFP, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the International Food Policy Research Institute and the United Nations High-level Task Force, "Price Volatility in Food and Agricultural Markets: Policy Responses", 2 June 2011.

C. Address the food, water, energy, climate nexus more effectively

65. Increasing productivity in a sustainable manner in the face of a changing climate will require better management of land, water, soil and genetic resources through practices such as conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, agro-forestry and sustainable diets. Techniques to increase water efficiency are often the same as those used in sustainable crop production intensification. Transitioning to more sustainable diets and minimizing waste can also reduce demand for water, a 50 per cent decrease in food losses and waste at the global level would save 1,350 km^3 a year. Recycling and reusing waste water, both within agriculture and also from urban to agricultural uses, can also contribute to solving the growing water shortages.[34]

66. In addition to water, food and agriculture are increasingly linked to energy policies, and the two sets of policies need to be coordinated in a fashion that ensures food security. Since agriculture and food security are also increasingly affected by climate change, greater research on adaptation of agricultural systems is called for in both developing and developed countries. Food and agricultural production methods and systems that can both enhance adaptation and contribute to mitigation are to be preferred.[35] Mechanisms that support improvements in energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technologies in the food sector could be incorporated into existing policies to promote win-win situations and capitalize on potential benefits on both fronts.[36]

67. Integrating agricultural development and food security into the post-2015 agenda through sustainable development goals will require that the eradication of hunger and the achievement of food security for all be sustainable over the long run. This in turn requires that agricultural practices of all farmers, large and small, become environmentally sustainable. In this regard, Member States resolved, in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288), "to strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development". We must recognize that the many millions of people who manage agricultural systems, from the very poorest to the most commercialized producers, constitute the largest group of natural resource managers on earth. Their decisions, as well as those of the world's 7 billion consumers, will shape global food and nutrition security and the health of the world's ecosystems into the future. The challenge, in the wake of the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development, is to support better decisions by building more inclusive and effective governance of agricultural and food systems.

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[34] FAO, *Towards the Future We Want* (Rome, 2012).

[35] See Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation" (see http://srren.ipcc.wg3.de/report).

[36] FAO, "Energy-smart food for people and climate" (see http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2454e/i2454e00.pdf).

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Sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Durban, South Africa, 2011

A. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/200, invited the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

B. Outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

1. Summary

2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011 and comprised the following sessions:

(a) The seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

(b) The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;

(c) The thirty-fifth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation;

(d) The thirty-fifth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice;

(e) The fourth part of the fourteenth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol;

(f) The fourth part of the sixteenth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

3. The Durban Conference enjoyed a high level of participation and was attended by nine Heads of State and Government, 5,400 Government delegates, 5,800 observers and 1,200 media representatives. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted 19 decisions, and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted 17 decisions. The outcomes include critically important decisions that have the following three key elements:

(a) A second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, to start in January 2013;

(b) The affirmation of the mitigation pledges under the Convention covering the period from now until 2020 made by 89 countries, both industrialized and developing, and covering 80 per cent of global emissions. In addition, agreement was reached on how and by when both developed and developing countries would report on these mitigation efforts, as well as on the details of verifying them;

(c) The identification by Governments of a path towards the future legal climate framework that would be applicable to all. Countries set a deadline of 2015 for the conclusion of these negotiations and a deadline of 2020 for the entry into force of the new agreement.

4. At the Conference, the infrastructure needed to support developing countries in a fully functioning climate regime evolved significantly. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted decisions on three key issues: the governing instrument of the Green Climate Fund; the terms of reference of the Climate Technology Centre and Network, which is the implementing arm of the Technology Mechanism; and the launch of the Adaptation Committee, which will coordinate and guide adaptation action.

5. In 2012, Governments were continuing the work being done on each of these issues by developing the policies, processes and guidelines of the Green Climate Fund, identifying a host for the Climate Technology Centre and Network, and holding the initial meetings of the Adaptation Committee.

6. Parties also reached agreement on the need to increase the level of ambition to curb greenhouse gases, informed by the review of the adequacy of the global temperature goal of 2 degrees Celsius to be carried out during the period 2013-2015, as well as by the next assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

2. High-level segment

7. The joint high-level segment of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was opened by the President of the Conference, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, and was preceded by a welcoming ceremony attended by the President of South Africa, the Secretary-General and other dignitaries.

8. The Secretary-General delivered a statement on behalf of the United Nations system, recognizing the challenges posed by climate change and emphasizing the need to make progress and move forward on key issues. He asked parties to work to implement the Cancun Agreements, to demonstrate tangible progress on short- and long-term financing, to work towards a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and not to abandon the collective vision of a comprehensive legally binding climate change agreement that was both, effective and fair to all.

9. At the high-level segment, statements were made by 156 parties, of which 9 were made by Heads of State or Government, 5 by either vice-presidents or deputy prime ministers, 91 by ministers and 44 by representatives of parties.

3. Outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

Establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action

10. The Durban Conference achieved a critically important decision: Governments decided to launch a process for the development of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable

to all parties, through the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. Countries have set a deadline of 2015 for the conclusion of these negotiations and a deadline of 2020 for the entry into force of the new agreement.

11. The Ad Hoc Working Group launched its work at its first meeting, held from 17 to 25 May 2012, with the election of officers and the adoption of its agenda. The agenda will guarantee that attention is given both to the agreement to be reached by 2015 and to efforts to raise ambition to curb greenhouse gases up to 2020.

12. Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention decided that the Convention process should raise the level of ambition to curb greenhouse gases, informed by the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the outcomes of the 2013-2015 review of the long-term global goal and the work of the subsidiary bodies.

Outcomes on the implementation of the Bali Action Plan and the Cancun Agreements

13. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted a decision on the outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, encompassing all areas of work under the Bali Action Plan and the Cancun Agreements: a shared vision for long-term cooperative action, enhanced action on mitigation, enhanced action on adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building and the review of the adequacy of the long-term global goal.

14. In this context, the Conference agreed to continue working to identify a global goal for reducing global emissions by 2050 and to identify a time frame for the global peaking of emissions, and requested the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention to consider the issue of equitable access to sustainable development.

15. In addition, the parties adopted guidelines for the preparation of biennial reports by developed country parties, the first of which must be submitted to the Convention secretariat by January 2014, with subsequent biennial reports to be submitted two years after the due date of national communications. The Conference also adopted modalities and procedures for the international assessment and review of emissions and removals of greenhouse gas emissions of developed country parties.

16. With regard to mitigation by developing country parties, the Conference encouraged those parties to develop low-emission development strategies and adopted guidelines for the preparation of biennial update reports by parties not included in annex I to the Convention ("non-annex I parties"), with effect from December 2014. Modalities and guidelines for international consultation and analysis of the biennial update reports of non-annex I parties were also adopted at Durban.

17. Furthermore, guidance was provided in relation to a registry designed to facilitate the matching of actions seeking international support with available support by providing and directing information to parties that have submitted information on nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking support, as well as to parties and other entities that have submitted information on the support available. The Convention secretariat is currently developing a prototype for such a

registry with a view to finalizing it at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

18. The Conference also adopted a decision on the sources of results-based financing for activities related to REDD-plus,[1] and requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to consider issues related to agriculture with a view to adopting a decision on the matter at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

19. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention was requested by the Conference to conduct a work programme to consider a framework for various approaches, including opportunities for using markets; to enhance the cost-effectiveness of and promote mitigation actions; and to conduct a work programme to develop modalities and procedures for a new market-based mechanism.

20. The Conference of the Parties provided guidance to the Adaptation Committee, including with respect to the modalities for carrying out its functions, reporting on its activities to the Conference of the Parties, its composition and decision-making, and other relevant modalities of work. Guidance in respect of national adaptation plans was provided by the Conference of the Parties through agreement on a process to enable least developed countries to formulate and implement such plans, an invitation to developing countries that are not least developed countries to employ the modalities for them, and agreement on reporting, monitoring and evaluation with regard to the national adaptation plan process.

21. The Durban Conference also took a step forward in climate financing through the adoption of the governing instrument of the Green Climate Fund, which includes provisions on, inter alia, the Fund's objective and guiding principles, governance and institutional arrangements, the rules of procedure of its Board and the establishment of an independent secretariat for the Fund. The Conference of the Parties requested the Board of the Fund to select a trustee and to conduct a process for selecting a host country for the Fund by the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

22. The Conference of the Parties also provided guidance to the Standing Committee, including on its composition and working modalities, and decided that the Standing Committee would report, make recommendations and assist the Conference of the Parties in carrying out its functions with respect to the financial mechanism of the Convention. This would help to improve coherence and coordination in the delivery of climate change financing.

23. The outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group also included arrangements for the full operationalization of the Technology Mechanism, including the adoption of terms of reference for the Climate Technology Centre and Network, which outlined its missions, functions, architecture, roles and responsibilities, governance, structure, reporting and review. The criteria for the evaluation and selection of the host of the Centre and Network were also agreed by the parties, allowing for the prompt launch of the selection process.

[1] Refers to policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

24. The Conference adopted modalities and procedures for the Technology Executive Committee, which had been established under the Cancun Agreements at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. The modalities adopted relate to definitions, policy recommendations, linkage with other institutional arrangements, the engagement of stakeholders, and information- and knowledge-sharing. The Committee had met earlier in 2012 and developed its rolling workplan for the period 2012-2013.

25. The Durban Forum on Capacity-building was established with a view to the holding of annual in-depth discussions on that issue with the participation of parties, relevant bodies under the Convention, experts and practitioners. The Forum was held during the thirty-sixth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, earlier in 2012. Parties also worked on the further definition of the scope of the review of the global goal as established under the Cancun Agreements[2] and on the development of its modalities.

Other decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties

26. The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change has been recognized as a process aimed at informing the organization of potential future areas of work that could support the scientific and technical work carried out under the Cancun Adaptation Framework. In this context, the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat of the Convention to organize a series of workshops, to prepare a compilation of case studies and to make better use of knowledge products and information generated under the Nairobi work programme for the benefit of parties.

27. In 2011, the work programme on approaches to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to enhance adaptive capacity was initiated by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, which is to make recommendations on such loss and damage to the Conference of the Parties. In addition, the Body has been requested by the Conference of the Parties to take into account a series of questions intended to serve as guidance for the further implementation of the work programme.

28. The Conference of the Parties also adopted a work programme on the impact of the implementation of response measures by the subsidiary bodies, with a view to improving the understanding of the impact of the implementation of response measures in such areas as cooperation on response strategies, the assessment and analysis of impacts and the exchanging of experience on and discussion of opportunities for economic diversification and transformation. Furthermore, a forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures was established by the Conference in order to implement the work programme and provide a platform allowing parties to share information, experiences, case studies, best practices and views on the issue.

29. The Global Environment Facility, as the operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention, reported to the Conference of the Parties on the steps that it had taken to implement the guidance provided by the Conference in previous years and on the support that it had provided to parties in relation to climate change.

[2] See decision 1/CP.16, paras. 4 and 138-140.

The Conference requested the Facility to continue working with its implementing agencies to further simplify and improve its processes, to continue enhancing the transparency of the project review process, to clarify the concept of additional costs as applied to adaptation projects, and to continue to provide resources for systematic observation and monitoring networks. The Facility was invited to continue to provide support to non-annex I parties on their technology needs assessments.

30. In addition, the Conference agreed on guidance with respect to systems for providing information on how safeguards for activities relating to REDD-plus, as agreed to in appendix I of decision 1/CP.16, were addressed and respected, and agreed that developing country parties undertaking such activities should provide information on that issue. The Conference also reached agreement on modalities for forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels, including guidelines for the submission of information on those reference levels.

31. After the consideration of relevant recommendations of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, the Conference of the Parties adopted the revised guidelines under the Convention for reporting on annual inventories of parties included in annex I to the Convention ("annex I parties") for trial use. In 2013, the Body is to begin considering information provided by annex I parties on their views and experience in using the guidelines, as well as their experience in using common reporting format reporter software that was recently upgraded.

4. Outcomes of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

32. At its seventh session, the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol agreed that the second commitment period under the Protocol was to begin on 1 January 2013 and was to last for a period of five or eight years, with the latter to be decided in 2012. Countries that will participate in the second commitment period under the Protocol will convert their emission reduction targets into quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives in order to ensure that reductions can be measured and assessed in accordance with Protocol rules and regulations. Furthermore, under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Protocol, parties reached agreements in the following areas:

(a) Land use, land-use change and forestry. The Conference adopted definitions, modalities, rules and guidelines relating to activities on this issue under the Protocol for application during the second commitment period. In addition, the Conference requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to initiate a series of work programmes relevant to this issue;

(b) Emissions trading and the project-based mechanisms. The Conference reconfirmed the use of the mechanisms under the Protocol as supplemental to domestic action by annex I parties. The Conference also decided to review and revise the design of the commitment period reserve for the subsequent commitment period in order to support the effective operation of emissions trading;

(c) Greenhouse gases, sectors and source categories, common metrics to calculate the carbon dioxide equivalence of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks, and other methodological issues;

(d) The consideration of information on potential environmental, economic and social consequences, including spillover effects, of tools, policies, measures and methodologies available to annex I parties. The Conference recognized the need to deepen understanding of this issue and recognized the establishment of a forum relevant to it under the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (see para. 28 above).

33. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Adaptation Fund Board to promote the accreditation of national implementing entities and direct access to Fund resources, requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to consider the initial review of the Fund with a view to recommending a draft decision and decided to complete that review, at its eighth session.

34. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol provided further guidance on the Clean Development Mechanism, including general guidance and guidance with regard to governance, baseline and monitoring methodologies and additionality, the registration of project activities, the issuance of certified emission reductions, the regional and subregional distribution of project activities and capacity-building.

35. The concept of materiality under the Clean Development Mechanism was defined by the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, which also decided on the initial scope of material information provided under the Mechanism. The Conference also requested the Executive Board of the Mechanism to implement the concept of materiality and report on the experience gained in its implementation, and to increase its interaction with designated operational entities in order to facilitate a uniform interpretation and application of that concept.

36. Guidance was also provided by the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol on the implementation of article 6 of the Protocol (on joint implementation), including in relation to its governance, and on the resources for the work carried out on joint implementation.

37. Parties were encouraged to further improve the implementation of capacity-building activities related to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided that the further implementation of the framework for capacity-building in developing countries should be improved at the systemic, institutional and individual levels, including by holding consultations with stakeholders, enhancing the integration of capacity-building needs related to the Protocol into national development strategies and plans, increasing country-driven coordination, and strengthening networking and information-sharing among developing countries.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

38. The General Assembly may wish to, inter alia:

(a) **Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;**

(b) Note the outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hosted by the Government of South Africa from 28 November to 9 December 2011;

(c) Urge the finalization and closure of the negotiating processes under the Bali Road Map;

(d) Pledge its support for the full and prompt implementation of the Cancun Agreements and the negotiating process under the Durban Platform;

(e) Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.

II. Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 66/201 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Introduction

39. In its resolution 66/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report constitutes an update to the Assembly on the principal activities undertaken in that respect.

B. Implementation of resolution 66/201

1. Background

40. In resolution 66/201, the General Assembly welcomed the outcomes of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, including the effort by the Conference of the Parties to find lasting solutions with respect to the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism. The continuing need to strengthen the scientific basis of the Convention was noted by the Assembly, particularly the decision of the Conference of the Parties to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into consideration regional balance, in order to further discuss options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification, land degradation and drought issues. In this respect, the Assembly noted the efforts under way to develop and implement science-based and sound methods for monitoring and assessing desertification.

2. High-level meeting of the General Assembly

41. On 20 September 2011, the General Assembly convened a high-level meeting focusing on core issues of the Convention, with the theme "Addressing

desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication".

42. The high-level meeting was divided into four main events: an opening meeting, two meetings in the form of panel discussions and a closing plenary meeting. The morning panel was co-chaired by the President of Nigeria and the Deputy Prime Minister of Luxembourg, and the afternoon panel was co-chaired by the President of Austria and the Prime Minister of Fiji.

43. During the closing meeting, the President of the General Assembly presented a summary of the discussions. Salient elements of the President's summary included a call by many world leaders for the strengthening of the scientific base of the Convention with a view to a better understanding of desertification, land degradation and drought, the enhancement of the implementation of the Convention as a global policy and monitoring framework for addressing issues of land and soil degradation in all ecosystems affected by land degradation, and the setting-up of a measurable sustainable development goal and targets in order to enable the international community to move towards a land-degradation-neutral world.

44. As mandated under General Assembly resolution 65/160, the President of the Assembly also presented to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention a summary of the deliberations at the high-level meeting.

3. Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

45. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held in Changwon City, Republic of Korea, from 10 to 21 October 2011. The session was attended by 6,000 people, including more than 80 ministers, civil society representatives and nearly 100 business representatives. The opening meeting featured the participation of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Kim Hwang-sik, and the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

46. The Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, and the Prince of Wales addressed the Conference of the Parties by video link. Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang participated in his capacity as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

47. The Conference adopted 39 decisions on the implementation of the Convention, including decisions relating to science, technology and knowledge, with a view to making the Convention a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification, land degradation and drought. Other decisions concerned the review of the implementation of the Convention and the mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) for enhancing its implementation, the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism, collaboration with the Global Environment Facility, the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to address desertification, land degradation and drought, and the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

48. During the high-level segment of the session, three interactive round tables organized around topical, relevant themes attracted high-level participation. The theme of the first round table was "Desertification, land degradation and drought and food security: preserving the resource base for our food security"; the theme of the second was "The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the

context of Rio+20: addressing desertification, land degradation and drought as a cornerstone of the green economy", and the theme of the final round table was "Harnessing science and knowledge for combating desertification, land degradation and drought: the path to improvement".

49. A major innovation in the Convention process was the submission by the Republic of Korea of the "Changwon initiative", aimed at furthering the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework. The Conference of the Parties welcomed the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Korea in submitting the initiative and noted its potential to enhance efforts being made by country parties through action programmes to address desertification, land degradation and drought.

4. Consideration of desertification, land degradation and drought by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

50. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development devoted a great deal of attention to desertification, land degradation and drought. In its outcome document, entitled "The future we want" (see resolution 66/288), Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives attending the Conference recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil management, and particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, poverty eradication, women's empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability.

51. Stressing the global dimension of challenges relating to desertification, land degradation and drought, they recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. Accordingly, world leaders pledged to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development. They also reaffirmed their resolve under the Convention to take coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels to monitor land degradation globally. In addition, they undertook to restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.

52. They resolved to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework, including by mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources. The Conference noted the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management. In this regard, the Conference encouraged and recognized the importance of partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources. It also encouraged capacity-building, extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices.

53. With regard to the science and policy interface, the Conference took note of the decision of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into account regional balance, for the discussion of specific options for the provision of scientific advice to parties.

54. Expressing deep concern about the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel

region, the Conference called for urgent action through short-, medium- and long-term measures at all levels and reaffirmed the need for cooperation through the sharing of information at the global, regional and subregional levels regarding climate and weather as well as forecasting and early warning systems relating to desertification, land degradation and drought and to dust storms and sandstorms. In this regard, the Conference invited States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information and forecasting and early warning systems.

5. Towards synergistic action on the ground to achieve global goals in preserving biodiversity, combating desertification/land degradation and addressing climate change

55. In the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio Conventions and the Presidents of the respective Conferences of the Parties held a breakfast round table to discuss ways and means of generating synergies in national implementation and in support of sustainable development. In a joint statement, the top officials of the three Conventions emphasized the need for concrete, concerted, simple and attainable solutions to achieve a truly sustainable future. They called on countries and Governments to set sustainable development goals, including achievable targets with regard to ensuring land sustainability, maintaining biodiversity and tackling climate change. They urged world leaders to move towards a land-degradation-neutral and carbon-neutral world and to stop the loss of biodiversity.

56. At the end of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, the Government of Brazil hosted a special commemorative event to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the three Rio Conventions. Representatives of the Brazilian Government, the Secretaries-General of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Executive Secretaries and representatives of the three Rio Conventions and several other dignitaries participated in the ceremony.

6. Global observance of the 2012 World Day to Combat Desertification

57. In its resolution 49/115, the General Assembly proclaimed 17 June World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. It invited all States to devote the World Day to promoting public awareness of desertification and the effects of drought and awareness of the implementation of the Convention. In 2012, 32 governmental, intergovernmental and civil society organizations sent to the Secretariat reports on events held in observance of the World Day.

58. In his message on that occasion, the Secretary-General stressed that global efforts to halt and reverse land degradation were integral to creating "the future we want". He pointed out that sustainable land use was a prerequisite for lifting billions from poverty, enabling food and nutrition security and safeguarding water supplies, and indeed constituted a cornerstone of sustainable development. Emphasizing that the people living in the world's arid lands, which constituted more than 40 per cent of the planet's land mass, were among the poorest and most vulnerable to hunger, he indicated that the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved by 2015 without preserving the soils on which the subsistence of these people depended. Without healthy soil, he pointed out, life on Earth would be unsustainable.

59. The global observance of the World Day was held at the Rio Conventions Pavilion in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to coincide with the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The one-day event received partnership support from United Nations agencies, regional entities, Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, which was indispensable not only for the organization of the event, but also for awareness-raising publicity.

60. The high-level round-table deliberations by heads of agencies were particularly attractive to the audience, as the spontaneous debate among the panellists on the theme "What sustainable land and soil management can do to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" prompted further substantive interactions between the panellists and the audience following the round-table discussions.

61. The names of the winners of the Land for Life Award were announced during an evening reception.

7. Land for Life Award

62. The Land for Life Award, an initiative established under the Convention to recognize achievement in the field of sustainable land management, was launched at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Changwon, Republic of Korea, by the Convention secretariat and partners. The application process generated 110 submissions from all over the world and in all six United Nations official languages. The applications were screened with the assistance of expert volunteers associated with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and 15 semifinalists were selected. A jury of eminent leaders in sustainable land management chose three winners, whose names were announced on 17 June in Rio de Janeiro at events marking the World Day to Combat Desertification. The first prize was awarded to Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods, in Haiti, which will receive $40,000. Two second-place winners will each receive $30,000: the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, in Turkey, and Conservation Efforts for Community Development, in Uganda. A recognition gala for the winners will be held in Doha in December 2012. The 2013 award cycle will open in October 2012.

8. United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)

63. At its sixty-fourth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 64/201, recalled its decision to declare the decade 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification and designated the Convention secretariat as the focal point of the Decade, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant United Nations bodies, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

64. During the reporting period, the inter-agency task force charged with the planning of activities in observance of the Decade was further expanded to 13 entities. The task force organized a global observance event in Tinerkouk, Algeria, hosted by the Government of Algeria (15-16 December 2011). Other observance events were held in Havana (4 July 2011), Addis Ababa (22 July 2011), Changwon, Republic of Korea (18 October 2011), Paris (9 November 2011) and Las Cruces, United States of America (12 July 2012). The events in Havana, Addis Ababa and

Paris were held in conjunction with the regional launch of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. In addition, two side events were organized by the task force on the margins of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Changwon, and the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Durban, South Africa.

65. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties decided to advance and strengthen existing initiatives under the Decade by, among other activities, compiling "a list of events, actions and activities" and, from these, developing a programme in support of the Decade (see decision 31/COP.10, para. 1).

9. Land Day 5

66. Land Day is aimed at increasing the amount of attention accorded by policymakers to land issues of relevance to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It is designed as a one-day event held in parallel with strategic intergovernmental multilateral environmental meetings and is organized jointly by the Convention secretariat and partner organizations. Land Day 5 was held on 6 December 2011, during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa.

67. Building on the momentum of global political attention to efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and drought generated by the high-level meeting on desertification, as well as on the outcomes of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, at which parties, for the first time, discussed the possibility of a global target of zero net land degradation, Land Day 5 advocated the endorsement by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of bold action at the global level with regard to land and soil.

68. Land Day 5 received Cabinet-level approval as an official South African governmental event during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, delivered the keynote address at the opening.

69. The event also marked the launching of a campaign to engage the public in the agenda of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development with regard to moving towards a land-degradation-neutral world.

10. High-level meeting on national drought policy

70. Drought is widely recognized as a slowly advancing natural hazard that occurs as a consequence of natural climatic variability. In recent years, concern has grown worldwide that droughts may be increasing in frequency and severity as a result of changing climatic conditions. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in 2007, stated that the world has indeed been more drought-prone during the past 25 years. Responses to drought in most parts of the world are generally reactive in terms of crisis management and are known to be slow, poorly coordinated and not well integrated with overall socioeconomic and environmental policies. Consequently, the economic, social and environmental

impacts of drought have increased significantly worldwide. Because of their long-term socioeconomic impacts, droughts are by far the most damaging of all natural disasters.

71. In order to address the issue of drought, the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies and relevant United Nations offices, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, plan to organize and hold a high-level meeting on national drought policy in Geneva in March 2013. It is envisaged that the meeting will provide practical insight into useful science-based actions for addressing the key drought issues being considered by Governments and the private sector under the Convention and the various strategies for coping with drought as a platform towards the development of national drought management policies. It is also expected that national Governments will develop and adopt national drought management policies that engender cooperation and coordination at all levels of Government and increase the capacity needed to cope with extended periods of water scarcity in the event of drought.

C. Observations and possible General Assembly action

72. Since the General Assembly convened on 20 September 2011 for its high-level meeting on the theme "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and the consideration of those core issues by the recently concluded United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the international community has increased the amount of attention it devotes to issues previously given a lower profile, including in the current debate on global sustainability. This change in emphasis is key to addressing global policy challenges.

73. In fact, by 2030 the demand for food is likely to increase by 50 per cent, the demand for energy by 45 per cent and the demand for water by 30 per cent. Each of these demands will claim more land. This in turn will lead to further deforestation and environmental degradation unless we commit to restoring degraded land. Avoiding land degradation while restoring degraded land is crucial if the rural poor are to achieve energy, food and water security.

74. In Rio de Janeiro, world leaders recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. They agreed to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development and resolved to take coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels to monitor land degradation globally. They also undertook to restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. Those policy developments are unprecedented. They require concerted action if they are to be made operational.

75. In this respect, the General Assembly may wish to endorse these commitments and to invite Member States and the United Nations system to implement them as a matter of priority, with a view to accelerating the pace and scale of sustainable development.

III. Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Introduction

76. In its resolution 66/202, the General Assembly invited the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation, with a focus on issues of relevance and interest to the Assembly.

B. Preparation for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012

77. Since the issuance of the previous report to the General Assembly, in August 2011 (see A/66/291), three meetings of the Bureau of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention have been held in Montreal, on 30 October 2011 and 5 April and 6 May 2012.

78. In preparation for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012, a number of meetings, including of the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, have taken place.

79. The seventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions was held in Montreal from 31 October to 4 November 2011. There were approximately 250 participants, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, the business sector and academia. The Working Group adopted eight recommendations, including on progress in the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions; benefit-sharing from and the unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge; the development of elements of sui generis systems for the protection of traditional knowledge; mechanisms to promote the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention; customary sustainable use as a new major component of the Article 8(j) work programme; the development of indicators relevant to traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use; and recommendations of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and terms of reference for the development of guidelines on repatriation. These will be forwarded to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration.

80. The fifteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention was held in Montreal from 7 to 11 November 2011. More than 400 representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, the business sector and academia attended the meeting. Eight recommendations were adopted that will be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration. The recommendations addressed, inter alia, a capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative; indicators and other tools for assessing progress in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; ecosystem restoration; proposals to address gaps in international standards regarding invasive

alien species; implications of changes in the water cycle and freshwater resources for the implementation of the work programmes on inland water biodiversity; the sustainable use of biodiversity; Arctic biodiversity; and ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body.

81. The sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body was held in Montreal from 30 April to 5 May 2012. Nearly 500 representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, the business sector and academia attended the meeting. The participants adopted 15 recommendations that will be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration. The recommendations addressed, inter alia, ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body and options for collaboration with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; the preparation of the fourth edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook*; island biodiversity; marine and coastal biodiversity; REDD+ safeguards for biodiversity; biodiversity and climate change; geoengineering; the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; the Global Taxonomy Initiative; new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; biofuels and biodiversity; incentive measures; and collaborative work on biodiversity and agriculture, forests, and biodiversity and health.

82. The fourth meeting of the Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention was held in Montreal from 7 to 11 May 2012. The participants adopted eight recommendations, which will be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration. The recommendations addressed, inter alia, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; the strategy for resource mobilization; the Financial Mechanism (Global Environment Facility); a message to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; cooperation with the secretariats of other conventions; biodiversity for poverty eradication and development; the engagement of business; and South-South cooperation. The Working Group specifically discussed ways to achieve the necessary conditions — robust baselines and an effective reporting framework — to provide the Conference of the Parties with appropriate and adequate information/data as a basis for setting targets in order to mobilize resources for the achievement of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

83. The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, which was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Nagoya, Japan, was open for signature from 2 February 2011 to 1 February 2012. By the closing date, the Protocol had received 92 signatures. It will enter into force 90 days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. As at 12 July 2012, the following five parties had ratified the Protocol: Gabon, Jordan, Mexico, Rwanda and Seychelles.

84. An Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol was established the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The first meeting of the Committee was held from 6 to 10 June 2011; the second was held from 2 to 6 July 2012.

85. The first meeting of the Committee considered, inter alia, the following issues: the modalities of operation of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing House;

capacity-building and development related to the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol; measures to raise awareness of the importance of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources; and cooperative procedures and institutional mechanisms to promote compliance with the Protocol and to address cases of non-compliance.

86. Since the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol would not be held concurrently with the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in view of the fact that the Protocol had not yet entered into force, the Committee also recommended that the Conference of the Parties to the Convention reconvene the Committee for a third meeting to address outstanding issues relating to its workplan in preparation for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The Committee also made additional recommendations to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, including with respect to guidance for the Global Environment Facility regarding programme priorities for the sixth replenishment period, the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund and support for activities prior to the entry into force of the Protocol; the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Protocol, as part of the review of the implementation of the strategy for resource mobilization, including the establishment of targets; capacity-building and development initiatives as well as awareness-raising activities to support the ratification, early entry into force and implementation of the Protocol; intersessional activities to be carried out in preparation for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to address outstanding issues related to the need for and modalities of a global, multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism; the establishment of the pilot phase of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing House; and the development of a strategic framework for capacity-building and development under the Protocol.

87. In addition, at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, parties will be invited to take stock of progress made towards the ratification of the Protocol. Other outcomes of the Committee included direct recommendations to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol calling for the adoption of an awareness-raising strategy for the Protocol.

88. Moreover, the secretariat of the Convention has been carrying out a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to support the early ratification and entry into force of the Protocol, with support provided by the Global Environment Facility and the Japan Biodiversity Fund. For example, a medium-sized project of the Global Environment Facility amounting to $1 million is being implemented by the secretariat, with co-financing being provided by the Japan Fund. The objective of the project is to assist parties to the Convention that are eligible for Global Environment Facility funding in preparing for the ratification and early entry into force of the Protocol through targeted awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. The project will run until the end of March 2013. Activities carried out under the project have included: capacity-building workshops; the development of awareness-raising materials; targeted briefings for parliamentarians, decision makers and other stakeholders; and the inclusion of components to raise awareness about Protocol workshops on national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

C. Preparations for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 1 to 5 October 2012

89. As at 11 July 2011, 163 parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity were also parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the governing body of the Protocol, will hold its sixth meeting from 1 to 5 October 2012 in Hyderabad, India, back to back with the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

90. At the sixth meeting, parties will consider, inter alia, the progress made to date in the implementation of the Protocol, on the basis of information received through national reports and recommendations of an ad hoc technical expert group meeting held in May 2012, at which participants reviewed the status of implementation of the core elements of the Protocol. By the end of 2011, 143 parties to the Protocol had submitted their second national reports on the implementation of their obligations under the Protocol.

91. Also at the sixth meeting, parties will consider the status of the signature and ratification of the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol. The Supplementary Protocol, which sets out international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress relating to damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms, was opened for signature by the Secretary-General, the depository, from 7 March 2011 to 6 March 2012. By the closing date, the Supplementary Protocol had received 51 signatures. As at 11 July 2012, two parties to the Cartagena Protocol had deposited their instruments of ratification of the Supplementary Protocol. The Supplementary Protocol will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

92. Furthermore, the participants in the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol will consider the work undertaken in the area of risk assessment and risk management with respect to living modified organisms. In that regard, they will consider the document entitled "Guidance on risk assessment of living modified organisms" and the revised training manual "Risk assessment of living modified organisms", which have been finalized by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management.

93. Participants in the sixth meeting will have before them recommendations of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on how to promote compliance with the Protocol. They will review the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the workshop conducted in November 2011, in order to look into issues pertaining to socioeconomic considerations that parties may take into account when importing living modified organisms. They will also review the activities undertaken during the reporting period and the outcomes in the areas of information exchange through the Biosafety Clearing House, public awareness, education and participation, capacity-building, financial mechanism and resources, and cooperation with other organizations, convention secretariats and initiatives.

D. International Day for Biological Diversity and United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

94. The International Day for Biological Diversity was observed on 22 May 2012 in more than 55 countries. The worldwide observance took place in Chennai, India, and was focused on the theme of marine biodiversity. In his message on the occasion, the Secretary-General of the United Nations highlighted the fact that oceans covered almost three quarters of the surface area of the globe and supported a rich tapestry of life on which human communities relied. Yet, despite its importance, marine biodiversity was threatened by habitat loss, pollution, overfishing, the impacts of climate change, ocean acidification and other factors. The Secretary-General called for action to improve the management and conservation of oceans through initiatives of the United Nations, Governments and other partners to curb overfishing, expand marine protected areas and reduce ocean pollution and the impact of climate change so as to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Target of conserving 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas by 2020, a crucial step in protecting marine biodiversity for "the future we want". The Executive Secretary of the Convention, in his statement, highlighted such endeavours as the Sustainable Ocean Initiative and The Green Wave. The latter is designed to raise awareness about and encourage the involvement of children and youth in action for biodiversity by planting a tree at 10 a.m. local time, thus creating a "green wave" starting in the Far East and travelling west around the world. More than 4,000 groups involving tens of thousands of children and young people from more than 70 countries have participated in the initiative since 2008.

95. The global launch of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity was carried out in Japan from 17 to 19 December 2011. A number of regional launches were also organized, including several in conjunction with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, since the Decade to Combat Desertification runs in parallel with the Decade on Biodiversity. These events included the regional launches of both Decades in the Caribbean, held in Cuba (July 2011), and in the African region, held in Ethiopia (July 2011). The regional launch of the Decade on Biodiversity in Europe was held in Geneva (August 2011). A number of national launch events were also held in India (May 2011), the Philippines (May 2011), Ecuador (July 2011), the Dominican Republic (August 2011), Fiji (October 2011), the Republic of Korea (October 2011), Norway (November 2011), South Africa (December 2011) and Ghana (March 2012).

96. In addition, a memorandum of cooperation was signed on 20 September 2011 with 27 international agencies, organizations and multilateral environmental conventions, with respect to activities to be carried out under the aegis of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity in support of the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Several agencies have held events under the Decade, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which organized an event on the margins of its General Conference (November 2011) to mark the organization's new biodiversity strategy and its contribution to the Decade. Other joint activities with partners included joint interviews and webcasts regarding the Decade carried out in partnership with the Global Environment Facility.

97. A number of tools and platforms have also been put in place for outreach and advocacy in relation to the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. These include a Facebook page, a Twitter feed and a YouTube channel.[3]

E. Participation in and contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

98. The Executive Secretary of the Convention participated in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and addressed the round table held on 21 June 2012 on the theme "Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference". In his statement, he drew attention to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (endorsed in the Conference outcome document), and stressed that its implementation would contribute to effective follow-up to the Conference outcome in a range of areas, including oceans, food security and adaptation to unavoidable climate change. In this context, he stressed the centrality of biodiversity to the development of sustainable development indicators, since it was an important element underpinning all three dimensions of sustainable development, and a truly green economy.

99. A special event to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), that recognized the contribution of the Rio Conventions, was held upon the conclusion of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, on 15 June 2012. In his statement, the Executive Secretary stressed that the establishment of the Convention at the Earth Summit had resulted from the recognition that the Earth's biological diversity, and the essential ecosystem services that it provided, formed the basis for the health, food security, cultures, wealth and well-being of human society and that its maintenance was central to the achievement of sustainable development. Considerable progress had been made with the development of programmes of work to address the management of biodiversity in all the Earth's biomes, including through national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Several Protocols had also been developed, including the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol, with the latter having been adopted to give effect to the Convention's third objective. He emphasized that a number of practical measures had also been taken whereby protected areas had been extended to cover more than 13 per cent of the Earth's land mass. Nevertheless, if biodiversity was to be safeguarded it was imperative that the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets be implemented as a matter of urgency.

100. The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development also recognized the crucial role of biodiversity in ensuring sustainable development and called for greater efforts to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. It reiterated the international commitment to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention and affirmed the importance of implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets. Given the adoption of a new legal instrument on access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources, the Nagoya Protocol, parties to the Convention were invited to ratify or accede to the Protocol

[3] See www.facebook.com/UNBiodiversity, www.twitter.com/UNBiodiversity and www.youtube.com/UNBiodiversity, respectively.

so as to ensure its entry into force at the earliest possible opportunity. The Conference outcome also recognized the need for resources and therefore welcomed the strategy for resource mobilization in support of the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention.

101. Collaboration with the other Rio Conventions was strengthened through the Rio Conventions Pavilion, which was set up for the duration of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference. Significant joint activities undertaken in the Pavilion included a full day of commemorative activities to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Rio Conventions. A joint statement was issued on the occasion in which the Executive Secretaries of the three Conventions committed their secretariats to addressing sustainable development challenges through prioritized cross-cutting themes.

102. Collaboration with other United Nations agencies and entities was also strengthened through participation in and the showcasing of joint activities aimed at contributing to the Conference. Particularly notable was the distribution of a discussion paper entitled "Our planet, our health, our future: human health and the Rio Conventions: biological diversity, climate change and desertification", produced jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The discussion paper had been formulated with the participation of the Director General of WHO and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

F. Partnerships and outreach

103. Outreach to and the engagement of major groups and stakeholders continued during the reporting period. Building on decisions made at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the first meeting of the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity was held in Tokyo on 15 and 16 December 2011. The Global Platform on Business and Biodiversity website was launched at the meeting. Considerable work has also been undertaken to evaluate various standards so as to ascertain where gaps and other inconsistencies may exist. In addition, preparations are currently under way for a number of activities aimed at the engagement of business at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, including a high-level business/ministerial event, the second meeting of the Global Partnership and a sustainability solutions marketplace.

G. Recommendations

104. The General Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session, may wish to, inter alia:

(a) **Stress the importance of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012, including its high-level segment scheduled for 17 to 19 October 2012, since it will provide a unique opportunity to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nagoya biodiversity outcomes;**

(b) Call on all United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions to fully support and implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as appropriate;

(c) Call on donors to finance the implementation of decisions adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;

(d) Invite all relevant United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020;

(e) Encourage Governments and all relevant stakeholders to contribute to and support the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020;

(f) Urge States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention and thereby make participation universal;

(g) Urge parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization at the earliest opportunity so as to ensure its early entry into force and its implementation;

(h) Call upon Governments to continue to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity by supporting the objective of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and promoting safety in the development and application of modern biotechnology;

(i) Urge parties to the Convention that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to do so as soon as possible;

(j) Urge Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to ratify or accede to the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress in order to ensure its early entry into force and its implementation.

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Item 70 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/167 and reports on steps taken by States and the United Nations system to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in that resolution.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 66/167, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its sixty-seventh session on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the resolution.

2. The present report contains information received from States on the implementation of the resolution, as well as relevant information on measures and activities of the United Nations system. Information was also received from non-governmental organizations and is available for consultation at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.[1]

II. Information received from Member States

Armenia

3. Armenia reported that authorities elaborated a draft law on freedom of conscience and religion, which was open for public discussions, with the participation of different religious organizations. The draft was sent to the Venice Commission for its opinion and it was subsequently reviewed. Representatives of the Venice Commission then visited Armenia and held consultations with respective bodies and presented additional recommendations, which are currently being drafted. The draft law was sent to all concerned State agencies and their proposals were taken into account during the elaboration process. The draft provides guarantees to ensure freedom of conscience, religion and belief; prohibitions on discrimination and interference and restrictions on the freedom of conscience, religion and belief; and provides for rights and obligations of religious organizations as well as their registration, among many other issues.

Azerbaijan

4. Azerbaijan reported that the policy of the Government in the field of religions is based on the freedoms of thought, speech and conscience and is pursued on the principles and norms of international law; international agreements to which the Azerbaijan Republic is a party; the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic; and other normative instruments. Government bodies defend the rights of all citizens as well as the rights of members of religious communities. Intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief are combated based on article 18 of the Constitution, which provides that all religions are equal before the law, and article 48, which provides that everyone enjoys freedom of conscience.

5. The State Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic for Work with Religious Organizations is the central executive body responsible for the implementation of the State policy in the sphere of religion. From 2011 to mid-2012, it held 43 seminar-training sessions in different cities and regions of the country. The State Committee

[1] The original texts of the contributions are available for consultation in the files of the Secretariat.

publishes the collection *State and Religious Social Thought* and the newspaper *Society and Religion*, which promote ideas of tolerance and traditions among religious communities and the general population. Established in April 2007, the six-member Consultative Council of the State Committee has as its main purpose the promotion of interreligious dialogue.

6. According to article 18 of the Constitution, spreading propaganda of religions (religious movements); humiliating people's dignity; and contradicting the principles of humanism are prohibited. It added that everyone has the right to legal equality regardless of religious affiliation and that this right is protected by law. Identification of religious affiliation in official documentation is allowed only with the person's permission.

Colombia

7. The Colombian Constitution of 1991 states that every individual has the right to freely profess his/her religion and to disseminate it individually or collectively. All religious faiths and churches are equally free before the law. In addition, the Religious Freedom Act (Law 133 of 1994) guarantees the right to freedom of religion and worship, and affirms that the State must guarantee religious liberty and will use its power to enforce such freedoms.

8. In relation to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 66/167 concerning "measures and policies to promote the full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and to take measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction", Law 599 of 2000 of the Criminal Code classifies crimes against religious sentiment and respect for the dead. These crimes are: violation of the freedom of religion (article 201); hindrance and disturbance of religious ceremonies (article 202); damage or injury to persons or to items intended for worship (article 203); and the violation of the sanctity of a corpse (article 204).

Georgia

9. Georgia reported that the status, duties, rights and obligations of public functionaries in Georgia is defined under the Law on Public Service. Article 13 of that law obligates public servants to respect the Constitution of Georgia and the rule of law, while accomplishing their official duties; to respect the rights, freedoms and dignity of people and citizens; and to impartiality and secularity of the public service. Moreover, some of the public entities have elaborated specific codes of conduct with regard to the penitentiary system, the police, the prosecutorial service, teachers, and broadcasters.

10. Every citizen of Georgia enjoys the right to freely manifest his/her religion and/or belief, and the prohibition of any interference or persecution on religious grounds is provided for in the Constitution and by different legislative acts. The Criminal Code of Georgia criminalizes acts of infringement of the equality of individuals, including those regarding their religious affiliation or confession. In March 2012 pursuant to recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the Criminal Code was amended to provide for aggravating circumstances regarding offences committed on various grounds, including religion.

11. Georgian legislation provides that any group can operate as a registered or non-registered legal entity and in July 2011, the Civil Code of Georgia was amended to allow registration of religious groups as religious associations. A religious group may decide whether it wishes to be established as a legal entity of private law (non-profit association) or as a legal entity of public law (religious association). In either case, it is eligible for all benefits provided by Georgian legislation.

12. The New Labour Code, adopted in 2010, provides guarantees against discrimination in employment relations on several grounds, including membership of religious or any other union. The Government of Georgia reported that to ensure the involvement of minorities in the political and social life of the country, it carries out an affirmative action policy in the fields of education and of policing.

13. It stated that it does not compile data on the ethnic or religious affiliation of its citizens or through any census and that information on nationality, religion or ethnic origin of the applicant is not included in any identity document. Georgia also reported that the Criminal Code contains guarantees against discrimination on religious grounds, but also contains separate articles prohibiting illegal interference in the performance of religious rites as well as punishment for disrespect to the deceased.

Germany

14. Germany reported that the Forum against Racism has been set up, where 55 non-governmental organizations hold a regular exchange with the Federal Government on issues concerning the fight against racism and xenophobia, in which phenomena based on religion or belief are also frequently discussed. The Federal Government has also launched the federal programme "Cohesion through Community Participation", through which it funds projects — primarily in towns and communities particularly affected by social and economic changes — for democratic participation, to combat extremism in eastern Germany, and to establish a lively and democratic community culture. A network, the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance, seeks to promote civic initiatives and partners working to support democracy and tolerance, and compiles best practices and makes them available on its website.

15. Germany reported that the National Action Plan on Integration addresses the issue of "immigrants in the public service" in order to raise the number of staff members with an immigrant background in the public service. While it has taken some measures, such as job advertisements tailored to this group and training labour recruitment staff, the federal administration is finding it challenging to give all social groups the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes.

16. With regard to efforts to counter religious profiling referred to in paragraph 6 (d) of General Assembly resolution 66/167, Germany states that the training curricula of all police career groups in the Federal Police contain several courses dealing with xenophobia, racism and migration, making officers aware of the issues and seeking to raise their intercultural competence.

17. In Germany, offences involving discrimination against persons based on religion or belief — particularly violent offences — are separately recorded and analysed as hate crimes, which are politically motivated crimes. It reports that

roughly 90 per cent of these offences have been attributed to right-wing-oriented and politically motivated crime.

18. Under German criminal law, hate crimes, including discrimination or violence based on religion or faith, have been dealt with by the courts, which generally issued stricter sentences, or, in the case of murder, consider the offender to have acted on base motives (section 211 of the Criminal Code). Specific forms of hate crime involving religious aspects are also punishable as incitement to hatred (section 130 of the Criminal Code), as defamation of religious associations (section 166 of the Criminal Code) or as insults (section 185 of the Criminal Code), where the offence was targeted at individuals. Germany reported that according to Police Crime statistics, a total of 2,272 cases of incitement to hatred and 58 cases of defamation of religious associations were reported in 2011, and 64.7 per cent and 34.5 per cent, respectively, cleared up.

19. In Germany, the police works to combat hate crime by: systematically prosecuting hate crimes as offences against State security and recording them separately; cooperating with counselling bodies and providing support for victims' assistance; differentiated analysis of the national number of cases in order to elaborate potential prevention measures; and cataloguing measures to combat politically motivated crime in order to perceive, record and combat relevant offences in a more targeted manner. It added that police forces take regular preventive measures such as stepping up physical protection or police controls with regard to especially vulnerable points, for example, Jewish cemeteries.

Ghana

20. Ghana reported that the Constitution of 1992 provides that all persons shall be equal before the law and that a person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of religion. The Constitution requires that the State shall endeavour to secure and protect a social order founded on the ideals and principles of freedom, equality and justice, and in particular, the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that every citizen has equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law.

21. Religion is not a criteria for holding public office in the executive, legislative and the judicial branches of government. In the exercise of their discretion, public functionaries are required to be fair and candid and not to be arbitrary, capricious or biased either by resentment, prejudice or personal dislike and shall be in accordance with due process of law. Neither is religion a consideration or prerequisite for participation in the economic sector. Furthermore, participation in and access to the Ghanaian media, particularly the State media, is not in any way restrictive on the grounds of religion or belief.

22. It reported that there is no religious profiling in Ghana, since the security services in general and the Ghana Police Service do not conduct questioning, searches and other law enforcement investigative procedures using religion as a criterion for such acts.

23. Ghana's official policy and measures engender and promote full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and it takes measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction.

The security services have on several occasions arrested persons for vandalization of cemeteries and desecration.

Greece

24. Greece referred to specific national legislation concerning the direct or indirect combating of racial discrimination, including Law 927/1979 (on punishing acts or activities aimed at racial discrimination), which in article 71, paragraph 2, provides that migrants who live legally in Greece are subject to the relevant social security system and enjoy the same rights as natives. Article 72 provides that migrants who legally reside in Greece are subject to obligatory school attendance and, according to article 84, migrants legally residing in Greece have access to the national health system.

25. The Greek Government has drafted a national strategy for the integration of third-country nationals, which brings together and coordinates all agencies involved with migrant integration. Under the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, Greece is carrying out a programme to provide intercultural training of civil servants dealing with third-country nationals or handling issues related to them.

26. In Greece, there is a legislative framework as well as measures and actions being implemented by the Greek Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs which contribute to combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion and belief. While the Constitution in article 3 recognizes the Eastern Orthodox Church as the predominant religion, the Greek State declares its commitment to protecting the religious freedom of all other religious expressions (article 13).

27. The dialogue between state and ecclesiastical jurisdictions and religious communities is constitutionally guaranteed and regulated with the constitutional guarantee to religious freedom. Additionally, the Greek State protects the practices of all religions and faiths as part of the freedom of religious conscience of believers, their worship and religious community. Free choice in the organization and administration of every church and religious community is protected by the Constitution.

Guyana

28. The revised Guyana Constitution (2003) provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contribute to the generally free practice of religion. Article 145 states in section (1) that except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this article the freedom to change his religion or belief, and either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in teaching.

29. Article 145, section (2), provides that no religious community shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for persons of that community and section (3) provides that except with his own consent, no person attending any place

of education shall be required to receive religious instruction if that instruction relates to a religion which is not his own. Article 38F states that no person's religion or religious beliefs shall be vilified.

30. With respect to the elimination of discrimination, article 149 of the Constitution provides for protection from discrimination. Article 149 (1) provides for the rule of law whereby no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect and further that no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.

31. Guyana reports that, in pursuit of its commitment to inclusive democracy and meaningful participation and representation, it established in 2008 a national consultative body, the National Stakeholders Forum. It added that civil society organizations, including religious organizations, have actively participated in the examination of legislation of special concern to them, prior to introduction in the National Assembly or before Parliamentary Special Select Committees.

Honduras

32. Article 77 of the Constitution of Honduras expressly guarantees the freedom of religions and cults, provided they do not contravene the laws and public order of Honduras. All Hondurans are equal before the law and any discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, class and any other detriment to human dignity is declared punishable. The Constitution, in article 78, also guarantees "freedom of association and assembly provided they are not contrary to public order and morals".

33. Article 321 of the Penal Code provides for a term of three to five years and a monetary fine imposed on any person involved in any form of discrimination against another person on the basis of sex, race, age, class, religion, political activism, disability or any other discrimination injurious to human dignity.

34. Article 12 of the Labour Code prohibits any kind of discrimination in the workplace. It also prohibits employers from influencing the political inclination or the religious beliefs of their workers (article 96) and establishing differences in salaries based on age, sex, nationality, race, religion, political opinion or union activities (article 367).

35. According to article 151 of the Constitution, education is an essential function of the State for the preservation, development and dissemination of culture, which must extend its benefits to society without discrimination of any kind; public education shall be secular and based on fundamental principles of democracy. Further to the Fundamental Law of Education passed in early 2012, education is independent of any organization, denomination, association or religious beliefs. The Honduran State guarantees the right of parents to choose religious education for their children as well as freedom of conscience and belief.

Iraq

36. Iraq reported that with regard to public officials and their public duties, article 2, chapter I, and article 14, chapter II, of the Constitution of Iraq provides that all Iraqis are equal before the law without any distinction on the basis of sex, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, sect, belief, opinion or economic and social status. It stated that there was no indication that minorities are being treated differently by public officials, particularly since officials do not inquire about religious or ethnic affiliation in the course of their duties.

37. The Government supports freedom of religion and pluralism through enabling all members of society regardless of religious affiliation to profess their religion. Under article 42, subsection 2, the State ensures freedom of belief and worship and also protects places of worship. The Government added that the Iraqi parliament is in the process of drafting a law with respect to minority groups in Iraq, which would grant them land to build cultural and religious centres and areas of worship in order to practise their religion freely. The political contribution of religious minorities is guaranteed since the Constitution provides for special quotas to ensure their representation in parliament. There are also special quotas for provincial councils where they reside, and they occupy high-level posts in Government.

38. It reported that all relevant authorities enforce the law regarding interrogation and search and seizure, without discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. With regard to places of worship, the Government is working to ensure that there are strong measures in place to prevent desecration of places of worship, including appointing minorities to secure their own neighbourhoods and places of worship. There are also provisions in Criminal Code 372 (1969), subsections 1 to 6, which govern such offences.

Lebanon

39. The Constitution of Lebanon guarantees the right to conscience; to personal liberty; to expression; to education; and to public employment, in addition to the protective role of places of worship for all Lebanese without consideration of religious affiliation. Lebanon reported that it is a country built on the branches of religion and diversity, love and respect for others. It added that any breach by any public employee is subject to accountability in line with the laws and procedures in force.

40. The Constitution also confirms that Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy based on respect, public liberties, above all including the right to expression and conscience, on social justice, and equal rights and obligations of all citizens without discrimination or privilege and with no distinction between people on the basis of affiliation. Article 7 of the Constitution states that all Lebanese are equal before the law. Under article 9, the right of conscience is absolute and the State must carry out its obligations in respecting religion and branches of religion. The right to worship is ensured and protected by the State, consistent with public law. The State asserts that citizens and foreigners have total liberty to practise their religion and conscience, with the condition that it not contravene rules and laws in force.

Malta

41. In Malta, condemnation and elimination of discrimination have been pursued through the enactment of legislation, both criminal and civil. Discrimination is prohibited by the Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights (which has been incorporated into domestic legislation by Chapter 319 of the Laws of Malta) as well as other international conventions to which Malta has adhered. Of particular note are amendments made to the Criminal Code in 2002 and 2009 and the enactment of the Equal Treatment of Persons Order (Legal Notice 85 of 2007). Discrimination on the grounds of religion and/or beliefs is integrated within the provisions of laws dealing with anti-discrimination in general.

42. The amendments to the Criminal Code included provisions making incitement to violence or hatred an offence. Subarticle 82A, which concerns violence and racial hatred states that anyone who uses any threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or displays any written or printed material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, or otherwise conducts himself in such a manner, with intent to stir up violence or racial hatred or whereby violence or racial hatred is likely, with regard to all circumstances, to be stirred up shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for a term from 6 to 18 months; and, for the purpose of the subarticle violence or racial hatred means violence or hatred against a group of persons in Malta defined by reference to colour, race, religion, descent, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins or against a member of such a group.

43. The Criminal Code also provides that xenophobic motivations constitute an aggravation in the context of offences against the person (bodily harm), for instance in article 222A. Article 83B introduced a general provision stating that any offence which is motivated by xenophobia is considered aggravated.

Mauritius

44. The Republic of Mauritius reported that the themes of General Assembly resolution 66/167 are enshrined in chapter II of its Constitution, entitled "Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedom of the Individual". Article 3 of the Constitution, on "Fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual", recognizes: (a) the right of the individual to life, liberty and security of the person and the protection under the law; (b) freedom of conscience, of expression, of assembly and association and freedom to establish schools; and (c) the right of the individual to protection of privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation.

45. Article 16 of the Constitution of Mauritius provides for protection from discrimination. In particular, its subsection (8) states that "no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting in the performance of any public function conferred by any law or otherwise in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority". In addition, it is a criminal offence to discriminate against a person by reason of race, religion or place of origin.

46. Article 11 of the Constitution protects freedom of conscience. Article 14 provides that no religious denomination and no religious, social, ethnic or cultural association or group shall be prevented from establishing and maintaining schools at its own expense.

47. The National Human Rights Commission is empowered to inquire into any written complaint from any person alleging that any of his human rights has been, is being or is likely to be violated by the act or omission of any person acting in the performance of any public function conferred by any law or otherwise in the performance of functions of any public office or any public body.

Mexico

48. Mexico reported that article 24 of the Constitution provides that: "Everyone is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practise all ceremonies, devotions, or observances of his respective faith, either in places of public worship or at home, provided they do not constitute an offence punishable by law."

49. In March 2012, the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico amended the Constitution to allow religious processions in public places, despite the separation of Church and State under the Constitution. The amendment affirms that every man is free to pursue the religious belief that best suits him, and guarantees the right to practise religion in public as well as in private places.

50. Article 2 of the Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship defines the administrative remedies that protect the right to religious freedom. The Law ensures that individuals may have or may adopt the religious belief of their choice and practice, individually or collectively, the acts of worship or rites of their choice. It establishes that individuals shall not be subject to discrimination, coercion or hostility because of their religious beliefs and shall not be required to declare said beliefs. Article 8 of this Law also defines the obligation of religious associations to respect at all times practices and beliefs foreign to their religion and to promote dialogue, tolerance and harmony between the different religions and beliefs represented in the country.

51. The General Directorate for Religious Associations promotes religious tolerance and investigates cases of religious intolerance. When parties present a religious dispute to the General Directorate, it attempts to mediate a solution; if mediation fails, the parties may submit the issue to the Directorate for binding arbitration. If the parties do not agree to this procedure, one or the other may elect to seek judicial redress.

Paraguay

52. Paraguay reported that article 24 of the Constitution provides for religious and ideological freedom such that freedom of religion, worship, and ideology is recognized without any restriction other than those established in the Constitution and the law. Pursuant to the Constitution, the State has no official religion and relations between the State and the Catholic Church are based on independence, cooperation and autonomy. The independence and autonomy of all churches and religious denominations, without restrictions other than those imposed by the Constitution and the law, are also guaranteed by the Constitution.

53. According to the Constitution, no one may be disturbed, questioned or forced to give testimony by reason of his beliefs or ideology.

54. Paraguay also indicated that article 233 of the Penal Code provides that anyone who, in a manner likely to impede the harmonious relations among people, insults another person on account of his or her beliefs in public or at a meeting or in publications is punishable by imprisonment for a maximum term of three years or by a fine.

Qatar

55. Qatar reports that it has ratified several international treaties which combat discrimination. It added that the Permanent Constitution of Qatar provides the legal framework for the two principles of equality and non-discrimination under its articles 18 and 19. All policies of the State are informed by article 18, which stipulates that Qatari society is based on the principles of justice, charity, liberty, morality and equality and article 19 stipulating that the State ensures the basis of the community by providing security, stability and equal opportunities to citizens. Articles 34 and 35 confirm, respectively, that citizens are equal in rights and obligations and that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion. The principle of equality and non-discrimination stipulated in articles 18, 34 and 35 must be implemented by all State institutions and bodies, which must refrain from any activity that might include or encourage discrimination. Under article 50, the right to worship is guaranteed to all persons in accordance with the law and the requirements of the maintenance of public order and morality.

56. The Criminal Code of Qatar in article 256 criminalizes all acts and actions related to denigrating or insulting the deity by any means; making insulting, disparaging or blasphemous remarks about the Koran; making insulting remarks about Islam or an Islamic ritual; defaming any of the revealed religions; insulting the prophet of a religion; or desecrating places of worship of a revealed religion or any object found in that place. Qatar reported that article 47 of the Publication Law (Law No. 8 of 1979) prohibits divisive or separatist publications of any type, and incitement to religious or racial discord, and imposes sanctions on anyone who supports such action.

57. It added that it established the Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations in 2005, the Dialogue between Religions in 2007, both mandated to promote a culture of dialogue and combat extremism. In 2011, it hosted a seminar on religious diversity in Doha. Qatar also indicated that it maintains open communication with foreign communities in Qatar and that it is keen to have them present in public life. It added that its housing policy ensures that every person on an equal basis has the right to live peacefully and securely, and that its police services carry out their duty in line with the Constitution and Public Order Law.

Slovak Republic

58. The Slovak Republic has elaborated the Action Plan to Prevent All Forms Of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Expressions of Intolerance as the basic systematic tool of the Government in the area of prevention and elimination of these negative phenomena in society. The main coordinator

creating and implementing the action plan is the Section of Human Rights and Equal Treatment of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic.

59. It reported that at the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, this issue is covered by the Department of Extremism and Spectator Violence of the Office of Criminal Police of the Presidium of Police Force. The main tasks of this Department include: focusing on extremist groups, their members, events, organizers and the international connections of these structures; directly performing investigative and operative activity; based on the analysis of the security situation, providing implementation and coordination of precautionary actions aimed at the elimination of extremism and spectator violence crime, and processing of the analytical and statistical outputs on the issue of racially motivated crime, extremism and spectator violence crime.

60. On 8 June 2011 by resolution No. 379/2011, the Government approved the concept of the fight against extremism for the years 2011-2014.

Samoa

61. Samoa reported that the Government has developed a legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level and recognizes freedom of religion to be a fundamental human right under the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa. Under articles 11, 12 and 13 of the Constitution, the rights of individuals to religious freedom are promoted and if not adhered to, are prosecutable by law. Article 11 (1) stated with respect to freedom of religion that every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and, in public and private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

62. Article 12 (1) stipulates that no person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in any religious ceremony or attend religious worship, if that instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own. Subsection (2) states that every religious community or denomination shall have the right to establish and maintain educational institutions of its own choice and to provide religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination. Article 13 of the Constitution of Samoa concerns the rights to freedom of speech and expression, assembly, association, movement and residence.

Turkey

63. Turkey reported that, founded on a tradition of secular republicanism, its Constitution and relevant laws guarantee freedom of religion, conscience and belief. The Constitution provides for equality before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, freedom of thought, religion or sect, or similar distinction. In its section on General Principles, all adherents of different religions are equal before the law. The Turkish Penal Code has specific provisions on hatred and intolerance based on religion or belief. In particular, article 115 of the Code provides that any person who forces another to modify or convert their religious, political, social and philosophical beliefs or obstructs the manifestation of

another's religion may be sentenced from one to three years in prison. Anyone who forces, threatens or by any other illegal act affecting a religious ceremony or practice may be sanctioned to three years of imprisonment.

64. Article 122 of the Code prohibits discrimination based on several grounds and in a number of economic spheres and situations, both private and public. Article 125 provides that disrespect and defamation: (a) against agents of the State in the exercise of their public functions; (b) by a person who insults or disseminates religious, social or political beliefs, opinions, or practices which is forbidden by the religion to which that person is an adherent; and (c) where the subject is considered sacred in the cadre of the religion to which that person is an adherent, is liable to a minimum sentence of imprisonment.

65. Turkey also reported that Law 6112 concerning television broadcasts governs the actions of media, including with respect to incitement to hatred on the basis of religion, race, language, social class or region. Under article 9 (6) of this law, commercial communications cannot contain discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, language, religion, sex, political or philosophical opinion, any other opinion, or national or ethnic origin and must not engender incitement based on these grounds. Turkey pointed out that article 7 of the Law on Functionaries provides that in the exercise of their functions, public officials are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of religion, race, language, social class and region.

Ukraine

66. Ukraine reported that civil servants, while performing their duties, are guided by a number of legal provisions, contained in the Constitution of Ukraine, other laws and regulations as well as General Principles on the Activity of Civil Servants, which in paragraph 2.6 stipulates that civil servants should demonstrate tolerance and respect for different religious organizations, respect customs and traditions of different peoples, and refrain from showing his religious convictions or preferences; and not grant priority to any associations of citizens, religious organizations irrespective of their size, status, confessional affiliations or nature of activity.

67. Under article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, the following will be punished: any wilful actions inciting national, racial or religious enmity and hatred, humiliation of national honour and dignity, or the insult of citizens' feelings in respect of their religious convictions, and also any direct or indirect restriction of rights, or granting direct or indirect privileges to citizens based on race, colour of skin, political, religious and other convictions, sex, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, linguistic or other characteristics. If a civil servant commits such acts while performing his duties, it should be considered an aggravated circumstance.

68. Ukraine stated that it respects and supports religious freedom and pluralism, and cooperates actively with a number of interreligious consultative bodies at the national and regional levels. The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations plays an active and independent civic role, and its opinion is taken into account in the process of elaborating standard setting documents related to the religious life of the society.

69. Article 4 of the Law of Ukraine on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations emphasizes that all citizens of Ukraine are equal before the law and shall be entitled to enjoy equal rights in all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life irrespective of their religious convictions. Any direct or indirect infringement on the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on the basis of religious convictions as well as inflaming religious feuds and assaults on the feelings of people shall be liable to sanction as established by law. At the same time, the Church (religious organizations) in Ukraine shall be separate from the State. Religious organizations shall not perform any State functions, shall not take part in the activity of any political parties, shall not nominate any candidates to State organs, propagate or finance the election campaign of candidates to these organs.

United States of America

70. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution, applicable to state and local governments, provides that Congress shall make no law respecting establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech. Freedom of thought and conscience are protected by the guarantee of freedom of speech and opinion. The United States of America stated that protections of freedoms of expression, religion, association, and assembly form the basis for pluralism in the United States and for the ability of members of all religious communities and non-religious communities to fully participate in society and to contribute openly and on an equal footing.

71. The 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion in education, employment, housing, public accommodations and access to public facilities. The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice enforces this statute and has established a Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination to coordinate cases involving religion-based discrimination, and to oversee outreach efforts to religious communities. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigates allegations of religious discrimination in employment. The Commission and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice have pursued employers who discriminated against employees based on their religion or national origin in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001.

72. The Department of Justice also has a Community Relations Service which is available to state, local and tribal jurisdictions to help prevent and resolve racial and ethnic conflict and to employ strategies to prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, colour, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. This Service has developed a set of best practices to assist localities in preventing hate crimes and restoring harmony in communities. It has also responded to reports of vandalism and arson involving mosques and Sikh *gurdwaras*.

73. In addition, the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in the Department of Homeland Security undertakes public outreach and engagement initiatives and also conducts training for law enforcement personnel and intelligence analysts.

74. The Unites States of America reported that it is a federal crime to commit arson or vandalism against religious real property, including houses of worship, committed because of the religious nature of the property.

75. The United States of America also engages in international efforts to foster global dialogue based on respect for human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience and belief around the globe. In response to Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, it hosted an expert-level meeting in Washington, D.C., in December 2011, which focused on enforcing prohibitions on discrimination based on religion or belief and implementation of effective outreach to members of religious communities.

III. United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

76. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations reported that it continues activities aimed at improving understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and religions.

77. Member States of the Alliance continue to be encouraged to develop National Plans for Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation as well as Regional Strategies, comprising initiatives in the fields of education, youth, media and migration in order to promote policy change and long-term action at the country level. In the framework of the preparation of the Second Action Plan for South-Eastern Europe, a regional consultation with civil society took place in April 2012 in Belgrade.

78. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations reported that its Education about Religions and Beliefs online learning community has expanded, becoming a premier Internet resource on issues concerning learning about diverse religions and beliefs.

79. The Alliance, in partnership with academic institutions and other organizations, supports an annual summer school and a fellowship programme. Similarly, the Alliance media programme focuses on amplifying the constructive role of media in furthering public understanding of divisive debates.

80. The Fourth Alliance Global Forum, held in Doha in December 2011, brought together 2,500 representatives from all constituencies to expand the global conversation on the role of culture, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in fostering sustainable development. The Fifth Global Forum, to be held in Vienna in late February 2013, will focus on promoting responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue and will include a cluster of working sessions from legal and educational perspectives on addressing the universal right to religious freedom and promoting a new religious pluralism through education.

IV. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

81. During the twentieth session of the Human Rights Council, on 29 June 2012, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized a panel discussion on the promotion and protection of human rights in a multicultural context, including through combating xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance, pursuant to paragraph 3 of Human Rights Council resolution 18/20. The panel provided an informative and engaging exchange of views on the promotion and protection of human rights in a multicultural context, including through combating xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.

82. The series of expert workshops, organized by OHCHR in 2011, on freedom of expression and the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred considered relevant laws, policies and jurisprudence in countries of the different regions and discussed strategic responses to incitement to hatred, both legal and non-legal in nature. Each of these events generated extensive information and a large number of practical suggestions for increased implementation of the relevant international human rights standards, and OHCHR plans to convene a final expert meeting in October 2012, hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco, to take stock of these results.

83. OHCHR also organized in May 2012 in Vienna an expert seminar to enhance the effectiveness of international, regional and national human rights mechanisms in protecting and promoting the rights of religious minorities. It was hosted by the Government of Austria and it brought together leading experts as well as representatives of Governments, international organizations and civil society.

V. United Nations human rights treaty bodies

84. During its seventy-ninth session, in August-September 2011, and its eightieth session in February-March 2012, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination made reference to the intersectionality of racial and religious discrimination in the course of its work. It recommended that a number of States parties take measures to ensure that all persons enjoy their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, without discrimination, in accordance with article 5 of the Convention.

85. The Committee was concerned by reports of stereotyping, prejudice and misconceptions expressed through the media with regard to members of ethnic and religious minorities. It was also concerned by manifestations of hatred, hate crimes, racist and xenophobic political discourse in a number of countries. The Committee recommended that States parties adopt or amend legislation in line with the Convention and take appropriate measures to counter and strongly condemn racism and hate speech by all, including by law enforcement officials and politicians, as well as manifestations of racism in the media, including through the Internet. It urged States parties to effectively prosecute those responsible, regardless of their status. The Committee also strongly recommended to a State party to closely monitor the activities of extremist organizations, and to adopt legal and policy measures with the aim of preventing their registration and disbanding their activities, as necessary.

86. In the case of one State party, the Committee was concerned by limitations placed on the right of migrant workers and other foreigners to manifest their religion other than Islam only in private. For another State party, the Committee regretted the persistence of stereotypes associating ethnic minorities and non-citizens with criminality, and the religion of Islam with terrorism. It recommended that another State party ensure that its new system of terrorism prevention and investigation include safeguards against abuse and the deliberate targeting of certain ethnic and religious groups.

87. Regarding participation in public and political life, the Committee recommended that a State party undertake legislative reform to prohibit

discrimination in employment in the public administration on grounds of sex, origin, language and religion.

VI. Special procedures of the Human Rights Council

88. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief participated in three of the expert OHCHR workshops on freedom of expression and the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred, held in Vienna, Nairobi and Santiago de Chile. At the workshops, the Special Rapporteur presented joint submissions with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Special Rapporteurs looked at the strategic response to hate speech, which should include efforts to educate about cultural differences, promote diversity, empower and give a voice to minorities, including through the support of community media and representation in mainstream media.

89. In December 2011, the Special Rapporteur discussed the issue of racial and religious hate speech with the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in Strasbourg and attended the meeting in Washington focused on the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18.

90. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance presented his first annual report at the twentieth session of the Human Rights Council focused on the prevention of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and also the report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/143 on the "Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".[2] He urged States to ensure that educational institutions implement policies and programmes on equal opportunities, anti-racism, gender equality and cultural, religious and other diversity.[3] The Special Rapporteur again stated that political parties should work towards fair representation of minorities within and at all levels of their party system, to ensure that their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity of their societies.[4]

VII. Conclusion

91. **The responses received indicate that the primary measure taken by States to protect freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression and opinion as well as to ensure the principles of equality and non-discrimination is constitutional enshrinement. The replies reflect that these fundamental rights are protected at the highest level, and that subsequent national laws, including the criminal code are elaborated and/or amended to address particular features or issues, such as incitement to racial hatred, protection of places of worship**

[2] A/HRC/20/38, para. 4.
[3] Ibid, para. 24.
[4] A/HRC/20/33, para. 29.

and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and discrimination issues concerning the public service.

92. **Advocacy of incitement to hatred is for the most part criminalized and often prohibited on several grounds, including religion or belief. The interdependence and the importance of mutually promoting and protecting freedom of expression and freedom of religion were noted in some contributions.**

93. **The submissions also illustrate that in addition to a legal framework, networks, consultative bodies, forums, councils and dialogues for exchange, cooperation and implementation of national strategies in this domain have been employed to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief.**

94. **States report that they have been taking measures to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion or belief. While some States may have a constitutional provision or legislation governing the action of persons carrying out public functions or holding public office in this regard, the majority of responses indicate that training of public functionaries and civil servants is used.**

95. **Responses pointed to particular initiatives and measures to protect freedom of religion and belief and support the integration, social cohesion and tolerance of different religious communities present in the country. Many responses also pointed to constitutional or legislative protections as well as the lack of any legal restrictions or measures limiting the practice of religion and the functioning of religious communities and associations. Some States acknowledged the challenge of encouraging the representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion or belief, in all sectors of society. A few States reported that they provide financial support or incentives to the functioning of religious associations and the activities of religious communities, and that they fund programmes aimed at combating intolerance against persons based on religion or belief.**

96. **Some responses addressed the issue of countering religious profiling or the invidious use of religion as a criterion in conducting questioning, searches and other law enforcement investigative procedures. Those responses focused on the issue of training and intercultural awareness initiatives directed at law enforcement personnel and police.**

97. **Virtually all responses indicated that States are adopting measures and policies to promote respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and to take measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction. States highlighted preventative and protective measures being taken, including enhanced policing in particular neighbourhoods and communities and at specific religious sites. Moreover, in many national contexts, the desecration of monuments, places of worship, religious sites and ceremonies are criminal offences met by strong sanctions, including fines and imprisonment.**